

NEW YORK Saturday Journal

A POPULAR PAPER FOR PLEASURE AND PROFIT.

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Vol. IV.

E. F. Beadle,
William Adams,
David Adams,
PUBLISHERS.

NEW YORK, MARCH 22, 1873.

TERMS IN ADVANCE
(One copy, four months, \$1.00.
One copy, one year... 3.00.
Two copies, one year... 5.00.)

No. 158.

BY AND BY.

BY ELEN E. REXFORD.

You kiss me on my cheek, and say
They stole the rose's red stain away;
You smile into my shining eyes,
And say you think of Paradise.
You hide your fingers in my hair,
And say there's sunshine tangled there;
Not always will my features bear
The beauty that to-day they wear.
When from my cheeks the bloom has flown,
And there is Winter's frost alone
Upon my hair, where sunshine now
Gleams brightly o'er my unwrinkled brow,
And from my eyes has faded out
The light you talk so much about,
When lines of care are on my brow—
Oh, could you love me then as now?
When silver threads are gleaming white
Among my braids, and youth's glad light
Has faded from my face away,
Oh, tell me—in that coming day
Could you still kiss my lips, and feel
The same sweet influence o'er you steal
That thrills along your pulses now,
When youth sits lightly on my brow?
Would love outlast the roses' bloom,
And live and flourish o'er the tomb
Of poor, dead beauty? Can you tell?
I pray you heed the question well.
For, if I give myself to you,
I ask a love that will be true
When age is on me, like the frost
In which the Summer's blooms are lost.
Think of the change the years will bring;
My step will lose its agile spring—
What? You have thought? Well, then, speak
out.
And tell me what you thought about.
You thought true love could not grow old,
Though ere shock off frail beauty's hold?
Ah, well! then take me, if you will,
But, when I'm old, oh, love me still!

The Beautiful Forger:

OR,
THE ADVENTURES OF A YOUNG GIRL.

BY MRS. E. F. ELLETT,
AUTHOR OF "MADEIRA'S MARRIAGE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER X.

THE TELL-TALE ROPE.

THE morning found the captive much the worse for his painful wakefulness. The first thing he saw on rising was a basket, which he found to contain a supply of food, more palatable than had been left the day before. There was fruit, and cold venison pie, and a bottle of excellent wine. Now that he was aware of the designs of his enemy, he did not apprehend any drugging of the potation—and he made a hearty meal.

On the floor beside the basket lay a sheet of paper and a pencil; the same dropped by his visitor. Looking upward from where it had fallen, he was at no loss to conjecture the means of ingress and egress. A square space in the unplastered ceiling revealed the trap by which the "grain elevator" is let down in warehouses. This had undoubtedly been used; but he could not make it available to escape.

He wrote a list of many articles used in chemical compounds; some of which might be hard to procure in the neighborhood. If the lady—he thought—should have to send for them to San Francisco, it would give him more time to mature his own plan of escape.

Having completed the list, he shoved it under the door, leaving a margin to mark the time when it should be taken away. Then he took his knife and the piece of iron, and went to work at the window-bars, keeping a watch the while on the paper under the door.

Some two hours passed before he saw it move. Some one was stealthily drawing it away. He ran to the keyhole, but the only thing he saw was the fold of a black garment—as it passed through the door beyond. He heard that shut and bolted.

By the afternoon he had detached the bars, and lowered the sash. The space was sufficient for his body to pass through.

Finding the pieces of rope he picked up not long enough, he cut the buffalo-skin into strips, tied them together firmly by the ropes, and secured them to the iron safe, which he dragged close to the window. He tested the strength of the fastenings, then patiently waited for night.

It was possible his visitor would return with the drugs; he must therefore make the best use of the early hours of darkness.

At last the time came. The night was intensely dark. Standing on the safe, he climbed over the lower sash, creeping through the aperture. He had previously ascertained where was the ledge on which he could step. He stood on this, then carefully pulled through the strips of buffalo-hide, and dropped them; the end reached within three or four feet of the ground.

Committing himself to this support, he commenced his descent. The edges of the strips of leather scored his hands terribly, but he clung fast to them; though he swung fearfully in the air, and grew so dizzy he was afraid his senses would forsake him.

As he reached the end, he let go, giving the rope of skins a push from him. He came to the ground on his feet.

"Hallo! what's this?" he heard a voice say, close to him. The knot on the end of the skin, in its rebound from Dr. Merle's hand, had struck violently against the head of some passer-by.

"Who struck me?" the unknown cried, angrily, thrusting out his hands, as if to intercept his assailant. "If you are not a coward, show yourself! I'll teach you how to strike a man in the face in that style! You're a bully fellow, to be sure!"

The voice was that of an old man. Should he discover the rope, Dr. Merle thought, he would give the alarm, and the prisoner would be recaptured. The doctor felt that he would be safer to trust the stranger's mercy.

The unknown, groping about, laid hold of the pendent strip of skin, and felt the knot that had hit him.

"Oh-ho!" he exclaimed: "a rope ladder.



"This grave was dug for you if you refuse to obey me—if you refuse to take me for your husband!"

Some robbers have climbed into the warehouse, and left this hanging! We'll see what they are about!"

He threw from him the knot of leather, and was striding away toward the building, to give the alarm, when the doctor called to him softly.

The man stopped, and in another minute the escaped prisoner had seized his arm.

"Who are you?" the man cried, snatching his arm away. "What do you mean, gripping me in that fashion?"

"Silence—for mercy's sake!" replied Dr. Merle. "I want to beg your assistance."

"You—are you one of the robbers?"

"There are no robbers! There has been no attempt at robbery. Come this way, and I will tell you all about it."

"Hands off!" cried the man. "I will know what all this means! You do not get me into a trap. Let me go, I tell you!"

The doctor still held him, and implored silence. He gave his own name, and told him he had been kidnapped by some unknown enemies, and confined two days and nights in the room above; that he had pried out the window-bars and had let himself down. He begged assistance to complete his escape.

The man listened, at first incredulously, but gradually the truth made itself known. He was Larry Sterne, the person in charge of the building, and had the duplicate keys. The idea of any one's using it as a prison was preposterous.

"But some one else must have had keys," said the doctor.

"Only the master."

"And what is his name?"

"Victor Ormsley. And he is gone away for I know not how long. He could have had no hand in the thing, I'll bet you!"

"He may have left his keys with some one."

The man considered a few moments. "Look you," he said. "I don't like to take your word without seeing for myself. I must go over the warehouse. You can wait for me; and if I find all right, I will come back and set you on your way."

"But my enemies may be searching for me. As you would have pity shown to you in extremity, do not, pray do not, leave me here without telling me of some place of safety."

"You may hide in my cabin. I will find you there presently."

"Where is it?"

"You must cross this meadow, turn to the right, and when you strike the river, go upstream till you come to the place. It is a rough log hut, but you will be safe there."

"Thank you. I will expect you."

The old man went on hurriedly, and Dr. Merle proceeded as he had directed.

He found the cabin in a clump of willows not far from the water. No answer being given to his knock, he opened the door and went in.

The glow of half-burned logs in the wide chimney showed him the single room the hut contained. It was scantily furnished with a table and dresser of unplanned pine boards, and a rude bedstead, on which was a mattress of straw. On some shelves in a corner were ranged tin platters and cups, and a black bottle, flanked by a ham bone and a loaf of bread, showed that the hospitalities of the place were very limited.

The doctor did not feel secure in this open hut. After he had warmed his chilled limbs, he crept up a rickety ladder, that stood in one corner, into the narrow loft, and pulled the ladder after him. Then he closed the trap that opened into the kitchen, and placed himself at the slit that did duty as a window, listening intently for any noise outside that might give notice of pursuit.

It was more than an hour before the owner of the cabin returned. The hidden fugitive knew his step, and lifted the trap to speak to him. He brought something heavy in his arms, which he flung down in one corner. Then he threw a stick on the fire, and looked around for his guest.

The doctor called to him, and asked if he had seen any one.

"Not a soul," was the reply: "all as mum as the grave. I found it all as you told me, and I brought away your rope-ladder," pointing to the corner, and the basket. I stuck the bars you had loosened in the window, and closed it firm like the other. It will puzzle them to find out how you got away; won't it, though?"

"It was a capital thought. They will take me for a necromancer in reality. And no one was in the building?"

"No one at all. I went all over it. The store-rooms have not been unlocked; they had put you in the old part. They reckoned on my never going there, for I never do; and if I had

heard you groan, I should have taken you for a ghost."

"Now the question is," said the doctor, anxiously, "how I am to get away?"

"You had better lie quiet till morning."

"I am afraid—"

"Do you know the country?" asked the old man.

"Not a rood of it; I was brought here in the night."

"Then you had better wait for daylight. You might run your head into a lasso without knowing it. Stay where you are."

"And will you go with me at daylight? I will pay you well for the trouble."

"All right, I will take you down-stream in my boat to within a walk of some place where you can get a horse to go home. Now, if you are hungry, there is enough in your basket for a good supper."

"Thanks, I want nothing; help yourself."

"I will take some of the wine. And the pie has a relish after dry smoked meat and corn dodger."

He made a tolerable repast; and recommending the fugitive to the bed in the loft, he threw himself down on a ragged quilt before the fire, and was soon in a profound slumber.

Dr. Merle could not sleep, sorely as he felt the need of "tired nature's sweet restorer." His head ached heavily; he was filled with gloomy thoughts. Even if he should be so fortunate as to get home in safety, what should guarantee him against a renewal of the attack? And what had become of poor Helen, and Margaret? What must they have suffered from apprehension about him? In a state of nervousness he could not control, he passed the entire night. He felt renewed hope, however, when he saw the first glimmer of day, and heard his host stirring below.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DEADLY PERIL.

WITH unsteady steps and a mind filled with forebodings, Helen followed the half-breed, who carried the lantern so as to throw a line of light on the path through the woods. It was not beaten, and was obstructed by twigs and leaves. Ulric broke away some of the boughs, and held the others back for the girl to pass.

They went on, as it seemed, for half a mile,

though it really was not more than half that distance, before they stopped in front of a steep rock, overgrown with luxuriant moss, and inclosed in a cluster of young trees. Here he set down the lantern, turned around, bracing himself against the rock, and steadily faced his young companion.

Helen, too, stopped and looked around her. She had become very much frightened.

"Why do you stop here?" at length she asked.

"This is the end of our journey," replied her attendant.

"The end of our journey? How strangely you talk!"

"Strangely, but truly."

"Where is my father, then?"

"I do not know."

"You do not know? Did he not send you to bring me to him?"

"No, he did not. There is no use in lying any more. I was not sent for you at all."

"Ulric, what do you mean?" cried the girl, her white lips quivering with a mortal terror.

"I will tell you what I mean, Helen," he replied. "I mean to make you my wife."

"Ulric!"

"Yes—Ulric. If you had been as clever as you might have been, you would have seen long ago how much I admired you. You would not have been pleased with my love-makings; I saw that, and I waited for my time to come. It has come at last."

"Oh, my father! my father!" sobbed the poor girl, clasping her hands with a gesture of despair.

"Your father is too far off to hear you, Miss Helen."

"Then it was you—you—who contrived to have him carried off?" cried the girl, reproachfully. "Oh, monster!"

"Don't pay compliments. No—I had nothing to do with your father's abduction. I did not see who took him. I have no idea where he is. But when Margaret came and awakened me, and told me to follow the ruffians, I saw that chance had thrown in my way an opportunity which should not be lost."

"Then it was all false you told us! and my father's letter—"

"I wrote that myself."

"To deceive me and bring me all this way from home?"

"I confess it—for that very purpose. I knew you would not come with me alone, unless I made up some such story!"

"Oh, my dear father! And you may really be wounded or ill, and in want of my help?" sobbed Helen, in bitter agony.

"No fear of that. He is safe enough. The robbers did not mean to kill him or to do him any harm."

"You were leagued with them?"

"No—not at all; but I know who set them on. A woman who had been doing mischief, and was afraid of being betrayed. Come, you need not be uneasy on that score. You have nothing to fear, either, Helen, if you will only be good to me."

"Monster!"

"Calling names will do no good. Come, listen to reason. Only consent to marry me—"

"To marry you, wretch?"

"It is just what you will have to do, for you are wholly in my power," returned the savage.

"The deaf old man we saw at the shanty along back, was a priest once upon a time. He can marry us tonight, or to-morrow morning. Then we will go back, and make a search for your father. I say your real father, for I have long known Dr. Merle is not the man. He stole you from your parents."

"Liar!"

"I suppose he did; but I don't care. He is not your father; and you will soon have a good husband."

"Silence, sir!" The scorn and disgust of the maiden even overpowered her terror.

"How dare you speak to me in this manner?"

"You will find that I dare a good deal, my pretty one!" said the half-breed. "You may as well submit to your fate."

"I will die first!" said the girl, resolutely.

"Die—before you will marry me?"

"I will—I will! ungrateful wretch—knave—liar—murderer, perhaps! God will not suffer your wickedness to triumph!"

"You will see!" muttered the infuriated savage.

"Take up the lantern and return to the cabin at once," said Helen, in the tone of authority she had sometimes used toward him at home. "Or give it to me."

She went forward to seize it, but he grasped her arm and dragged her to one side.

"You are determined to provoke me!" he hissed, in the extremity of rage. "Take your doom, then, if you will not submit to me!"

He snatched up the lantern, and still keeping his hold on her arm with a grip that was painful, he pulled her several steps toward the side of the upright rock.

The girl recoiled in horror.

Just at her feet was a yawning pit, freshly dug in the black mold!

The earth thrown out was heaped on one side. As the infuriated half-breed held the lantern over it, she could see that it was deep enough to bury her.

Ulric had dug the hole to bury the box of treasure he had stolen; but finding the earth grow moister and moister the deeper he dug, and supposing he was over a running stream, he had extended the pit without discovering a dry spot, and had finally abandoned it, and buried the box on the other side of the rock.

His cruel cunning now perceived how he could terrify the helpless maiden into compliance with his wishes.

The lantern that disclosed the frightful pit flashed its rays into the face of her persecutor. Helen saw in those wild features an expression of ferocity that convinced her he was capable of any deed of cruelty.

"Mercy! mercy!" she faintly shrieked.

"You said you would die before you would marry me!" cried her brutal captor. "Now you shall have your choice. This grave was

dug for you, if you refuse to obey me; if you refuse to take me for your husband."

With one desperate effort Helen burst from his grasp, and turned to flee, filling the air with wild screams for help.

"Ah! is that your game?" cried Ulric, setting down the lantern, and striding after her. "Pretty headway you'll make against me!"

He caught her dress, and the next instant she was firmly clasped in his powerful arms, her own arms pinioned to her side.

Her shrieks for aid were redoubled.

"Now, look you here!" cried the creature; "you may scream as loud as you like; but the rooks or owls that hear you will not come to the rescue, I'm thinking." He laughed—a low laugh of derision and triumph. "You can no more escape me, my pretty bird, than you can spread a pair of wings and fly to the top of yonder hemlock! You've just got to give in, and do as I choose, or in you go into the pit, seasoned for it first by a taste of this knife!"

And he pulled out from his bosom a sharp weapon, the blade of which he drew on the flat side, across her neck.

"Oh, Ulric!" screamed the poor girl, "do not kill me! I have never done you harm; I have often been kind to you! My father was so good to you! Take me to him, and he will give you money! Oh, have mercy, and take me to him!"

"Money!" echoed the wretch, with a laugh. "I've got all his money! I've buried it where he will never find it; and I've got you; and I mean to bury you if you do not promise—ay, and swear—to marry me; to marry me tonight!"

He had dragged her back to the brink of the pit. She struggled still, but more feebly—her strength was giving way. But she continued, with sobs and cries, to plead for mercy.

"Hold your jaw!" cried the brute. "I'm sick of this! Make up your mind at once. Will you marry me, or not? You have but one minute!"

He pulled her to the very verge of the pit, and bent down her head, forcing her to look into it, while the drawn knife gleamed in the feeble rays of the lantern, close to her throat.

"Why don't you speak? fool!" cried the wretch. "You will not—then die!" with a brutal oath, as he lifted the dagger to plunge it into her throat.

The girl had closed her eyes. She had not heard, nor had her enemy heard, the crashing of two leaves under footsteps rapidly approaching.

Helen felt herself seized by the shoulder with a powerful grasp, and dragged backward. She had just sense enough to know that she was rescued, when she sunk upon the ground, completely insensible.

The baffled ruffian turned to make fight with the new-comer, who, he could just see, was of a frame much lighter and less sturdily strong than his own. But the other was too quick for him. No sooner had he let Helen fall to the ground, than he rushed upon Ulric with such impetuous force as to topple him over into the pit.

He followed up his victory by seizing the spade lying on the heap of earth, and throwing and scarping in over the half-suffocated villain the piled-up clay and turf. In a moment the pit was filled, despite the struggles of the surprised prisoner, and the loose earth was trampled down.

"Let him scratch his way out!" said the victor, laughing, as he heard the stifled groans of his buried victim. "He deserves to be hung and left for the buzzards to pick."

Taking up the lantern, he lifted the insensible girl in his arms, and carried her through the forest.

Consciousness returned to her slowly. She felt the motion reviving her as she was borne in the arms of her deliverer. Her first thought was an ejaculation of thankfulness, at her escape from deadly peril.

The stranger stopped and halloed loudly. His call was answered.

"Come here, Steve, and help me!"

The voice was fresh, clear, and rich; it had youth and chivalry in its ring.

"Let me down, please!" said the girl. "I am quite able to walk. Oh, I am so grateful to you, sir."

She had overrated her strength. But, for his support, she would have fallen to the ground.

"The brandy, Steve! This way!"

The man produced a flask from his pocket. The other uncorked it, and held it to the girl's lips.

"Take it, Miss; it will give you strength."

Helen sipped it; but it was too strong. She put it away.

"It burns her mouth," said Stephen.

"Wait a minute; here is a spring."

Taking from the same receptacle a leather cup, the young man half filled it with water, into which he poured a little of the brandy. This he held to the girl's lips, and she drank it. The good effect was immediate.

"Where are our horses, Steve?" asked the gentleman, for such Helen at once perceived him to be.

"Just here, master," replied the man.

"Bring them up, and throw my cloak over one of the saddles. You must follow us on foot. If you see that villain I pushed into the pit yonder, give him a settler, that he may not follow us; he will be skulking about here before long on our trail. You will set us in the road, and then take the lantern."

He turned to Helen.

"Are you able to ride a few miles?" he asked, with a tone of tender courtesy that went to her heart.

"Oh, yes, sir, quite able. I can ride or walk. It was only the fright that made me faint. God sent you in time to save me."

"You must not think of what you have suffered," the gentleman said, noticing how she shuddered and trembled.

"Come; if you can ride, I will help you to mount. I am sorry I have no side-saddle."

He led her to a fallen tree, beside which stood the gentlest of the two horses. Helen sprang to her seat and adjusted her dress, while he mounted the other steed; and both rode on after the man who carried the lantern to show them the way out of the woods.

They reached a road somewhat beaten, though wild and rugged; and then, after giving a few directions to Stephen, the gentleman requested Helen to ride on more briskly; keeping close to her side when the path was wide enough, and leading the way when it was too narrow for two to ride abreast.

No further conversation took place. Helen was the more grateful for this forbearance, as the silence enabled her to collect her faculties, and think what it was best to do next.

With a feeling of unspeakable relief she came forth from the heavy shadows of the forest, and rode on under the open sky, where the stars shed a glimmering light on the way.

CHAPTER XII.

A GRIEF HARD TO BEAR.

THE idea that occurred to Margaret, as she sat huddled in the cellar, was to sever the rope that tied her wrists by rubbing it against a sharp projection of the stone wall just over her head. She had struck against it as she had let her

head fall back in despair of escape; and then she suddenly remembered the irregular surface of the rocky wall of her prison.

Not a moment was lost in putting the idea into practice. The sawing of the rope against the sharp stone severed it in a very short time.

Her arms were free; but she dared not stop to release her feet. Quickly, with a prayer for help, she dragged herself across the damp floor to the spot where the reddish glimmer of light showed the cask of powder.

With great caution she staggered to her knees, and looked into the cask. The candle was burned to within two inches of the powder!

Margaret was a woman of nerve. She knew her life depended on her calmness and care, at this critical moment.

Stepping carefully over the cask, she inserted both hands, on either side the candle, grasped it firmly, and lifted it out.

She was saved!

The reaction almost deprived her of sense. She sunk back, only conscious of a rush of grateful feelings; of devout thankfulness!

The piece of candle was still in her hand. As soon as she could lift herself up, she drew herself to a safe distance from the cask of powder, and applied the flame of the candle to the rope that bound her ankles. This was soon burned through, and she pulled it apart, carefully extinguishing the flame that still smoldered.

Then the good woman arose and put in order the ransacked cellar, before she went up-stairs. She lighted a lamp, and set in order the rest of the house. Then she saw to the fastenings of the doors, and retired to her own room.

She felt safe from another visit from the marauders, and was glad she had baffled them by refusing to set them upon the track of her young mistress, and the doctor's assistant.

She did not look for their return the next day; supposing from Ulric's report that their master was in no condition to travel. So she resolved to make use of the hours of his absence by helping to provide for his future safety.

After her simple breakfast, she dressed herself in the well-preserved black silk she used to wear only on great occasions, put on her hood and cloak, and walked through the small village to the house of the *alcaldé*, or *jefe letrado*; the person who had judicial authority over the district. She asked to see the *alcaldé*, and was shown into the small parlor.

Mr. Bond's housekeeper was an acquaintance, and had often had an hour of pleasant gossip with Margaret. When she saw her pass into the parlor, she improved the time while her master was in his study, by coming in for a few minutes' chat. Hence the welcome of Dr. Merle's abduction, and the attempt of the robbers, was rehearsed, and commented on by the astonished listener. It was repeated when Mr. Bond came in, losing nothing by the comments of Mrs. Gray.

So daring an outrage, committed in the precincts of the *ranchería*, called for notice; and the officer promised to bring the matter immediately to the attention of persons who at that time did the duty of what was afterward called a vigilance committee. Men should be sent in search of the doctor, and the whole mystery should be strictly investigated. As it appeared no robbery was committed the first night, some other object was to be gained by securing the physician's person. Had he any enemies?

"No—certainly not. He had always lived a quiet life," replied Margaret. Yet some one, Mr. Bond thought, must have had a grudge against him.

Margaret had a fancy of her own on the subject. It was that her master had been kidnapped and carried away, for the purpose of compelling him to prescribe for some sick person. He had often refused to go far from home to see a patient. It was not his wish to practice medicine; and only in the case of neighbors did he ever go to see any one who was ailing. His own delicate health made him fearful especially of night journeys. He might have refused to go with those who came for him, and been forcibly carried off. So he had heard of such things.

The idea appeared not unreasonable, especially after the mysterious occurrence that had preceded the abduction; the visit of a woman in disguise in quest of medicine. But it seemed, from Ulric's report, that the doctor had escaped from his captors.

"Yes," the housekeeper said; "but he was hurt so much he could not return home, and had to send for his daughter."

Mr. Bond asked, rather suddenly, if the doctor had implicit faith in his assistant.

Margaret answered that he had; but that she had long been suspicious of him. It had been sorely against her will, and her young mistress went off alone with him; but the orders brought were strict, and it was thought best that she should obey them.

The magistrate thought Ulric's removal of the cash-box a very suspicious circumstance. It was finally decided to trace him first. If he were really sent by his master, both robber and ought to be apprehended.

But Margaret, who had so narrowly escaped a terrible fate, was not to be permitted to return alone to the house. She must stay all day in the *ranchería*; and at night, if she persisted in her purpose of returning to guard the house, some of the men, with Mr. Bond's housekeeper, would accompany her. So it was settled.

Dr. Merle was taken by his hospitable friend, immediately after breakfast, to his boat, and they proceeded down the river. The old man sculled the boat, for the fugitive was unable to render him any assistance. He lay so quiet on the skin in the bottom of the little craft, covered by a cloak without speaking, that his companion began to fear he had suffered more from his night's adventure than he had been willing to acknowledge. He appeared to be in a stupor most of the time.

They landed, and had a long distance to walk. Dr. Merle roused himself, and his spirits seemed to return. He walked briskly enough. When the old man proposed that they should stop at some one of the cabins on the wayside for a meal, he shook his head, saying he was afraid of discovery. They went on without stopping. It was near sunset when they came within sight of the *ranchería*, and after a couple of miles, the doctor pointed out the house in which he lived.

They found it fastened; every door and window secured. This was so strange that the physician could not understand it at all. Larry Sterne suggested that his daughter and the housekeeper had been afraid to stay there alone, and had probably gone to the house of some neighbor for a lodging.

Dr. Merle could not think so. He was sorely troubled. But the first thing was to get into the house. This was accomplished with difficulty by breaking the fastenings of one of the kitchen windows. The old man did this, and then opened the door. It was dark within, but a candle was speedily lighted, and then Dr. Merle went down into the cellar.

He had been gone but a few moments when the old man heard a cry, and then a deep groan. He ran down-stairs, and found the unfortunate physician prostrate on the ground in a sort of fit. He had discovered the loss of his box of money.

The knowledge that robbers had visited his house—the uncertainty of Helen's fate, was too

much for his enfeebled nerves and brain. He lay moaning and catching his breath in gasps, unable to articulate a word.

The old man lifted him in his arms, carried him up-stairs, and laid him on a couch in the parlor. Then he made search for some brandy, supposing that a few drops of cordial would restore him. He found none, but plenty of cold water, with which he bathed the sufferer's face and hands, trying to induce him to swallow some of it.

The doctor was only half-conscious, but refused to drink. Sterne could only make out from his continued moaning and motions, that he had been robbed of something. He tried to soothe him, and proposed that he should go to the settlement for assistance.

He arranged the couch for the sufferer's comfort, and spread a cloak over him, and then was about leaving him, having lighted a lantern, for it was already dusk, when a noise of talking and tramping of footsteps outside startled him.

The idea that the robbers had returned was the first that occurred to him; but, when he heard the voices of women, he took courage and opened the front door.

Several persons stood outside; it was the body-guard that had escorted Margaret back. They screamed and recoiled when they caught sight of the old man. Having seen lights moving about the house, they were fully possessed with the idea that the marauders had returned, and were in full possession of the premises.

Cries and contradictory directions were heard on all sides. "Seize the robber!" exclaimed the women. "There are more of them in the house!" was another exclamation. One of the men, who was a constable, leveled a large pistol at poor Larry.

"Hold on! What are you about?" Sterne cried, lustily. "Don't fire! Who are you?"

"Not a step nearer!" answered the officer. "Surrender at once! How many of you are there?"

"No one but myself! Put down your pistol! What do you want?"

"The robbers. You had best surrender!"

"I am no robber! I was just going for help!"

"Who are you, then?"

"My name is Larry Sterne. I have brought home the master—and he is in a fit!"

"Oh, my poor master!" screamed Margaret, and, darting past the others, she sprang up the steps.

Where is Dr. Merle? Did you say he was here?"

"In the room yonder!"

In a moment the whole matter was understood. The entire company filed into the house, and an apology was made for drawing a weapon on the kind old man, who had come so far out of his way to do a deed of kindness.

At seeing so many persons, the poor stricken man had started up, and glared wildly at each one in turn. Margaret was weeping bitterly while trying to soothe him.

She saw him look several times at Sterne, and then pitilessly at her, as if he wanted something he could not ask for in coherent language. She comprehended his wish by intuition.

"You have done him service, sir," she said, "and he wants to have you paid."

An eager assent from the sick man showed that she had rightly guessed his desire. At the same time he spread out his hands with a hopeless gesture.

"The house has been robbed, and all our money is gone. But I have something!" and she ran up-stairs, returning with a few coins she had taken from her own chest. These she forced into Sterne's hand, in spite of his reluctance to accept them.

"And now, tell me," she cried, "where you have left Miss Helen! It is strange she and Ulric did not come back with the master."

The old man said he knew nothing of them. The doctor had been locked up in a building where no one lived; he had made his escape the night before, and he had helped him home. He had said his daughter would be uneasy about him, not knowing what had become of him.

"And he did not send for her two days ago?" almost screamed Margaret.

"No—he could not have sent for her."

"Then—I see it all!" shrieked the poor woman. "That villain lied, and brought a letter he had written himself. And I let her go—I let her go with him! I ought to be hung for it!"

She flung her apron over her head, clasped her hands in the desperation of self-reproachful anguish, and swayed backward and forward. Her friend, Mr. Bond's housekeeper, could not comfort her.

"What shall I do?" she exclaimed. "What shall I do when my poor master calls for his daughter?"

"You are not to blame," said the officer, who had been leader of the party. "You have done your duty."

"No—no—I have not!" she answered, with bitter sobs. "I should have kept her with me! Oh, my dear Miss Helen!"

The sick man echoed the name in a piteous tone of entreaty.

"There he is calling for his daughter, and she is gone! But I will go after her."

"No," replied the constable; "my good woman, it is your duty to take care of this gentleman. He is very ill. I am going to send up a doctor to see after him; and a posse of men will be sent out to search for the young lady. Just you be quiet—and tell us which way she took, if you can."

Margaret told them every thing that had occurred.

And the fellow carried off the box of money?

"Yes—he said the master sent for it."

"We shall track him, never fear! He can not get on very fast, with a young lady and a heavy box to carry on horseback. Mr. Bond will send a notification to the different posts. Don't you fret; only take care of the sick man."

As the men prepared to leave the house, Mr. Bond's housekeeper interfered with a proposition that the patient should be removed to lodgings in the hamlet. His own home was unsafe, as it might be visited by the bandits, and every thing in it would remind him of what he had lost.

Margaret earnestly seconded this proposal. She could not bear the idea of staying in the house, when the master was in no condition to direct any thing.

"But you can not move him without the doctor's leave," remonstrated two or three. "He seems overcome now."

He had fallen again into a stupor, and lay rigid and motionless, with a face white as death. It was arranged that the two women should remain with him that night. The physician should be sent at once, to examine him and administer such remedies as might be necessary. The next day, if he could bear removal, he should be taken away.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 155.)

"My boy," said a clergyman, "don't you know that it is wicked to catch fish on Sunday?"

"But I haven't sinned much yet," said a boy, without taking his eye from the float; "hain't had a bite."

LOVE CAROL

BY ORIOLE.

Just under my window a little bird sings,
And as all around me its melody rings,
It tells me in accents harmonious and clear
As ever fell soft on a listener's ear.
Last night as it sat with its mate on a spray,
And peeped in the room where my lady-love lay,
It saw her raise slowly her beautiful head,
Then, faintly, murmuring, gently she said:
"Dear Harry, I love none but you."

Haste back, little bird, to my lady and say
Her words are as sweet to my heart as the day,
And never, never from my memory shall fade
The impression on thy white wings they have made.
Her love beams upon the dark waters of Time,
As by her side with monotonous chime
It glams through the clouds that overshadow my life,
And shows me the words, when I faint in the strife,
"Dear Harry, I love none but you."

The False Widow:

OR,

FLORIEN REDESDALE'S FORTUNE.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.
AUTHOR OF "ADRIA, THE ADOPTED," "CERIL'S DECEIT," "THE WIDOW'S WEED," "MADAME DU-RAND'S PRODIGES," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXII.

ASSERTING A WOMAN'S RIGHT.

IT was noon next day. Walter Lynne roused himself up from that heavy, dreamless sleep—the state of drunken stupefaction. He put his hand to his head and stared about him uncomprehendingly. Something, what it was, had broken his deep slumber. Somebody was at his door; a loud, prolonged knocking, stopped in listening for sounds from within, began again.

"Oh, that. Come in, I say. Yes, I see—door locked. Hold quiet a minute, can't you?"

The beleaguering party held quiet at hearing a response, and Walter sprung out of bed, thrust himself into a dingy dressing room, and pulled back the bolt. It was only Boots, after all, and there had been no occasion for his unusually hurried movements. Mr. Lynne's choleric rose in place of the apprehension which had first possessed him.

"You—you grinning imp of darkness. If it's a bill, you come in here at your peril. I'll not be badgered by bills or bullying from that dragoness below stairs to-day—you can give her that with my compliments."

Mr. Lynne's rent was in arrears, and Mr. Lynne's landlady had been asserting herself in an uncomfortably important manner of late, and his temper was not improving under the pressure of her frequent duns. He would have shut the door with a snap, but Boots interposed.

"Beg your parding, sah. 'Tain't no bill, sah. Bress your heart, pushed it fro' your door hours 'go. Lady, sah, perlicker, waitin' in de private parlor. No name, sah!"

A lady! Was it—could it—had Florian relented—no, not that; did she mean to befriend him?

He filled a glass from the case of liquors standing as he had left it, and fortified by the generous contents, dressed himself hastily. He was pale, he had a miserable headache now that he had time to think of it, he was wretchedly alive to the fact that he had played the last card of a losing game. He had not brought himself to facing the future even in contemplation yet, but he was oppressed by its chilly shadow all the same. His toilette was scarcely so scrupulously made as usual, but the shallowest of fops have their thoughts at discord with the proper arrangement of cravats and shirt-studs at times. He was rather more interesting than he had known it in his parlor, his nervousness, the touch of carelessness in his dress. In his usual precision he was a little too suggestive of hair-dressers' and tailors' models.

The same dark-robed, close-valled figure which had greeted the elder Lynne on the previous night, half-rose at his entrance. The garish sunshine of the March noon streamed in to the little vulgar parlor of this second-rate boarding-house. There was the glare of newness in its fittings which such parlors usually present, the large figured paper on the wall, the green rolling shades at the windows, the carpet a huge bouquet of green and red and yellow roses, the worst of burlesques in their unnatural distortion.

Miss Lessingham flung back her veil with an impatient hand, disclosing her face paler yet than his own, her dark eyes preternaturally bright, and her lips set in a straight line—such a line and such an expression as covers a will obdurate as the law of the Medes.

Mr. Lynne experienced a thrill of vague uneasiness which lost itself in supreme wonderment as to the possible cause of this unexpected visit. Young ladies are not in the habit of calling at the bachelor lodgings of their gentlemen friends without some very momentous object to sanction the step. Miss Lessingham did not propose to keep him long in suspense.

"Don't distress yourself in wondering what brought me here, Walter," she said, with a faint smile. "I shall enlighten you in due course of time, but I'm going to exercise a prerogative and put you through a course of catechism first. You have heard me meeting some heavy losses, I have heard. I want you to tell me, without the slightest variation from the truth, do you owe any debts not included in that fifty thousand dollars—notes for which Colonel Marquestone holds against you?"

This was catechism with a vengeance, straight to the point in the fewest possible words. Under her unflinching gaze, Mr. Lynne's first surprised stare wavered lower, his first inclination to resent the intrusion upon his private business weakened, and he responded in the meekest, most contrite of tones:

"Upon my word, Miss Gerry, however you've got hold of that, you've got the very worst. I don't owe a cent outside of that, upon my honor."

"Come, Walter, that will not do. It's the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth I'm wanting. You are hardly apt to have all your bills paid. You owe nothing besides, you are sure, except your bills?"

"Except my bills, of course. That's truth, I assure you. Marquestone bought up every thing clean, much good may it do him, too."

"And pray, how much may those bills amount to?"

"Upon my word! Hem—I've got them somewhere, I presume; I can hunt them up, if you like, Miss Gerry."

"About what, then? Haven't you some idea of the total? Pray, don't stop to consider my impertinence, but give me straight-forward answers. The fact that I demand them should be proof sufficient that I am trying to befriend you. It may expedite matters to ask what bills you owe."

Another glance at the determined face decided Mr. Lynne to make a full and free confession. Rather an odd movement on Miss Lessingham's part, but then Gerry had been partial to him all ways, and if she had made up her mind to sift his short-comings through, he might as well make a clean breast of it—especially since she knew—so much.

"There's the landlady, and the landlady, and the tailor—only for my yesterday's outfit—something at the livery, and for bouquets and the like, about five hundred in all, I think."

"And the champagne, port, sherry, absinthe, and the like—they are not included, I presume?"

"Upon my word!"

"Answer me!" imperatively.

"Well, then, two hundred more. That positively covers every thing—seven hundred, if any difference, less. That's the truth, Gerry. I was flush a week or so ago and squared all around except the landlady and the landlady."

"Ah!—seven hundred within a week or so. Very moderate, Mr. Lynne. But even those patient mortals, the landlady and the landlady, are not content to be put off always. How do you propose to settle up these things, Walter?"

"I don't propose to settle them up—I can't. You're so well informed you should know that, Miss Lessingham."

Miss Lessingham was sublimely indifferent to the tinge of sullen resentment conveyed in his tone.

"Don't you suppose Miss Redesdale would be willing to assist you?"

It was too much for Walter's equanimity, and his reply was rather more expressive than elegant.

"Miss Redesdale be hanged—no! Will you be kind enough to let me know what you're driving at, Miss Lessingham?"

"Geraldine, if you please, Walter. I will tell you—soon. Am I to understand Miss Redesdale is nothing to you—now?"

"At any rate, I am nothing to Miss Redesdale. Do you want the whole story, Geraldine? On my soul, I believe it would do me good to tell it."

He did tell it, unreservedly, not sparing himself in the least.

"Now, you've got the whole of it. Every thing wasted, every thing I hoped for or cared for, forfeited; there's not a thing for me to turn to. Happy subject, am I not? I'm much obliged for the kindness I'm sure you mean, but I only see one way to end it all. One more unfortunate, weary of breath; you know, only I think I should prefer strychnine in my absinthe before breakfast."

The slight laugh with which he ended, the fingers, slender and white almost as her own, working nervously at a button of his coat, hurt Gerry more than his resentment at her questioning could have done. Something like a mist clouded the brightness of her eyes for the first time, but she overcame the rising weakness.

"Not so bad as that yet. I called to see your uncle last night, Walter—I tried to mediate for you."

"Well?" scarcely hope in his voice.

"He would do nothing for you—"

—all for which you judge him harshly; but I love him, and I have married him, and I mean to save him. Aubrey, dear, don't be hard with him for my sake."

And Walter, a little nervous, yet with something gained of true manly dignity, came forward to speak for himself.

"It must seem unendurable to me, Lessingham. I'm not worthy of her I know, but I'll make myself so, surely as I live."

Aubrey hesitated, but Gerry's appealing face and the knowledge that it was too late to offer opposition, induced him to make the best of the matter, and he gave his hand, though a little reluctantly, to his sister's husband. Seeing that, Gerry went down upon her knees by her mother's side.

"Mamma, dear, don't be a goose, please. You mustn't go into hysterics, nor a dead faint, nor anything of that sort. Here are your salts, and the ammonia—you shan't faint, mamma. There, that's dear; let me fan you now. I didn't mean to give you such a turn, but you know I'm myself, don't you? Just remind papa how you married him against your own family's wishes, and do bring him around so he don't quite annihilate us. No one can make papa see reason when he's in a passion but you. Please, dear mamma."

Even Mrs. Lessingham found it difficult to reconcile her husband to reason or leniency on this occasion, but his wrath exploding in a tornado was suddenly appeased since the case was irremediable now.

Walter, at Gerry's prompting, asked for and secured a situation as clerk in the bank at a salary of twelve hundred a year. It was the best position he was capable of filling, and a great change for the man of leisure who had squandered his thousands in a single night before now. But Gerry kept him manfully to the mark.

And quite unknown to them, Walter Lynne, senior, kept a sharp watch upon the young couple, and more than once relinquished his after-dinner nap for an hour of complacent musing. One day he encountered Gerry on the street as he got down from his carriage, and hurried forward to accept her. "Bad bargain I'm afraid, Gerry; better have taken me. By the way, that stock doubled. Don't you think you'd have done better by sticking to the old investment?"

"Come around to tea to-night, and see what you think," Gerry answered.

He did not go to tea, but he did drive through a side street a day or two later, and take a glance at the unpromising tenement block where they had humble apartments. For Gerry, in choosing her course, had taken its results from the very outset.

Mr. Lynne nodded approvingly, and shook his head doubtfully in the same second.

"Pluck—good beginning. See if it lasts. Tire of it, I think."

CHAPTER XXIII.

A STARTLING APPEARANCE.

Mrs. REDESDALE and Colonel Marquestone were *à la carte* over a daintily-laden lunch-table. Florrie had been in, dressed for the street, and stood trifling over a plate of fruit just long enough to excuse herself from keeping their company. She had disliked the colonel from the outset. Now that she knew something of his habits, and had learned the part he played in leading Lynne to the straits he reached, his pale, sneering face and insinuating address were simply intolerable to her. She left the room now with a feeling of relief at escaping his presence, and a moment after her shadow, as she passed, fell athwart the long, low window, where early spring sunshine filtered through.

"No broken heart there," said the colonel, watching the supple figure carried on by its buoyant, elastic step, quite out of sight. "Not even an insidious 'worm' I'd bud' to prey on that damask cheek—though it's anything but damask in fact. Jove, that girl's a beauty, Mirette! Pure and fair as a pearl, and as cold—on occasions. The wonder is that Lynne was shaken off so easily. By George! if it'd been in his place—"

He broke off short, and his companion shot a searching glance across at him.

"Well, colonel, if you're Or—perhaps you may be wishing to supplant him."

"Who knows? Could you stand the loss of your most devoted with that degree of fortitude?"

"If you—ever—dared—"

"There, Mirette, I can't have you angry with me, even for the gratification of seeing you jealous. That green-eyed monster will intrude on the best and the worst of us; but for that I couldn't be certain even now that you care for me, after my lifetime of constancy. Are you sure you wouldn't throw me over even now if a better match should offer?"

"But none better will offer—giving him a coquetish glance. "If it should, I'll consider."

"Do you know what I should do if you were to play me false, as you did twice before, Mrs. Redesdale?"

"Give me an ounce of forgetfulness, or strangle me outright, I judge from that ferocious look. Come, colonel dear, let us drop the contemplation of that impossible contingency. Revenge is sweet, and you know you hinted at a chance of your own unfaithfulness."

"As if I could be any thing but true to you, my beautiful damask rose—you Cleopatra among women."

"A dusky jewel beside the 'pure, fair pearl'—what a black diamond, colonel?"

"As rare and as priceless. Don't force me to pay you more compliments, my queen. I never could do justice to the subject, and you make me lose sight of the common sense which should go with my time of life."

"Drifting into the 'ere and yellow'—a gracious couple, well matured in ripened charms—that describes us, don't it? Well, we'll make a gorgeous affair of this autumn of our lives, if it goes well."

"And the fates are surely enlisted on our side. How intensely romantic—that Lynne affair! Think of our proud beauty going into voluntary exile, taking up her cross of martyrdom and crowning herself with it! And they say feminine devotion to our sex went out with the introduction of Paris fashions. Refreshing refutation of that, I vow. What a downfall to the Lessingham pride! The judge went into a fearful rant and declared my lady might have her own row with the poor stick of her choice, and, by George! she seems fully able to do it, too. Plucky to the last; refused all help from her big brother except the clerkship, and keeps Lynne to his place, regular as clockwork. Sold her jewels, they say, to pay his small bills, and start them housekeeping. Plucky of her, and lucky for us! I wonder the defunct soap-boiler—that comes out when the money is gone—don't rise up out of his grave at the way his hard-wrung earnings of a lifetime have gone in a lump."

"You are paid—every thing?"

"Every cent. I was safe enough either way, but I didn't expect to realize on my investment so soon. If we had missed our calculations, that much would have come out of the pretty step-daughter's portion. Otherwise, some time in the course of human events, the old hunk

of an uncle must have gone under, and a snug little amount of interest footed up on it."

"You are fortunate in not being left to that trust—the uncle has disinherited him. He declared it here the other night, purely to warn Florrie, I believe. And as for her, she was glad of a chance to be rid of her bargain. Early fancies don't often linger, your experience to the contrary, colonel. And Louis is devoted as I could wish him. We can congratulate ourselves in the surety of success on every point, I think."

Colonel Marquestone pushed away the cluster of luscious hot-house grapes he had been idly manipulating.

"Then, Mirette, what's the use of deferring our bliss? You've waited long enough to satisfy all the proprieties, and the snug little plum of half the young lady's fortune will come just as soon to you—sooner, perhaps, for the fair Florrie doesn't take to me particularly. Pity, for I'll be a model step-papa, if she'll acknowledge the relationship. Remember that I've been waiting some twenty-four years now, Mirette."

"And impatient at the difference of a few months or weeks at last. Better to be quite secure, Granger, for though you have succeeded in making yourself of importance for the time, though you are tolerated—yes, that's the word—you know, and so do I, that you are liable to lose every thing at one sweep, just as that poor young fool, Lynne, found himself ruined the other night."

"I'm too old a bird to be caught by chaff, as he was."

"Possibly. But suppose, now, that the revenue officers should swoop down on a certain lonely old house hidden away among the cliffs, down on the Jersey coast, I wonder if even your skill at the green table would cover the disastrous effects of a move like that."

"Of course not," the colonel answered, coolly. "Moreover, if I changed to be surprised there, I might receive a token of my country's gratitude—board and lodgings at the public expense for the rest of my life. You see, there's a troublesome little episode which happened years upon years ago that might be brought up against me. Only a common bar-room brawl, occurring within the city limits, in which I was unlucky enough to send a vagabond Italian stroller to glory—or elsewhere. I owed the fellow a certain grudge and I scored it there, and one of those sullen varlets down on the coast who witnessed the affair would turn State's evidence in a minute, if he found himself caught, and thought he could make by it."

"What a delicious *meurtrie* the whole story would make dished up in style by those catering penny-a-liners. First, the innocent, young Canadian beauty, whose far-seeing papa encouraged her in accepting a very eligible suitor who had the good taste to fall in love with the wonderfully pretty face of the penniless girl. She was willing enough apparently, but the very night before the matrimonial knot should have been firmly tied, she ran away with a beardless, organ-grinding Italian—brought the gray hairs of the fond parent in sorrow to the grave, blasting the bright hopes, breaking the fair vision, very materially altering her ex-fiance's course through life. He had been a rather well-to-do tradesman, and honest as it is in the nature of ordinary people to be. Now he turned reckless, spendthrift, and ran through the process of sowing his wild oats at the same breakneck speed the same class of young fools follow to this very day. He came to the end of his tether though, and began to look about him for means to line his pockets, quite empty by this time. He had no desire to go back to the old honest jog-trot of trade, and he fell to doing a little smuggling for variety's sake. Half a dozen years passed on in this way, and then he met his old enchantress, grown handsome as a Gipsy queen, and not looking unlike one after the rude Bohemian life they had been leading. She had tired of it, however. She met her old lover by stealth, and insinuated very broadly that if she were free now she would gladly abide by her first choice. Then came the little episode I have mentioned. It wasn't so neatly done as it might have been; there was a suspicion of foul play broached, and I found it convenient—highly necessary, indeed—to take a hasty trip away from the city. I had an interview with my charmer first, and how do you suppose she met me? With reproaches and even threats, instead of the gratitude and immediate reward of her peerless self as I had expected. I had no choice; I had to leave her, and hoped that time and separation would soften her cruel obduracy. I was back again soon as I dared venture, and, would you believe it, found her the wife of another man! It would seem she had been playing a double game, deluded me into removing the obstacle her husband had been, got the tool—myself—out of her way, and married the man she had been cutting her cards to secure!"

"It turned out that she made a monstrous mistake. That night she snatched the heir of the great Kynon property, and found she had wedded a dependant relative, who, madly infatuated, was sailing under the heir's colors, and trusting to her love to forgive the deception when all was over. Her discomfiture was so complete, and the pair had such a cat-and-dog time of it, I couldn't bring myself to break the discord of their domestic life. I determined then to throw off the wiles of the enchantress, and went back to my engagements on the Jersey coast."

"I quite lost sight of my old love, but never quite forgot her."

"Time passes, and less than two years ago I again encounter her. Time's changes have worked wonders—not in her looks, for she is almost as young and fully as beautiful as before—but now she is the widow of a wealthy man, the envied, courted, flattered relic of Hubert Redesdale."

"What a sensation it would make, particularly when faithfulness is at last rewarded, when the constant lover gains the hand which was promised him more than a score of years ago, when the charming, clever adventuress, thrice widowed, is wedded again and to her earliest choice. What are you smiling at, Mirette? What is there ludicrous in the consummation?"

"Nothing whatever. That Cliequot is enlivening, and I was a little amused at your selection of terms. Adventuress, you called me. What would the dear five hundred friends of the present Mrs. Redesdale say—do you suppose—could they see her past history as you have unfolded it? Society is always being humbugged more or less, and I amuse myself sometimes by imagining what a degree of horror a story like that would excite."

Colonel Marquestone leaned back in his chair, half-closed his eyes, and regarded her with peculiar intensity.

"Well, my dear colonel, what may it be?"

"You looked for a minute, Mirette—upon my word! you looked as though you might be humbugging me along with the rest."

She laughed outright.

"So I am, I think. According to your own showing, so far as you know, the partners of my wedded joys found the consummation state any thing but fair and peaceful, and here you are impudently seeking the same bed of thorns. I wonder you aren't warned by former examples."

"Forewarned is forearmed," returned he, complacently. "There is a Petruccio for every Kate, and I shall be your Petruccio."

"Presumptuous man! Come, my dear sir, if you are done with reminiscences, go driving with me. I have ordered the carriage for this time."

"Mirette, I'll not be put off with excuses or evasions. When are you going to reward me as I deserve? Will you name the happy day, or will you begin the new lesson and defer all to me? I must have your decision now—before we go."

"A pleasant prospect for me, oh, my Petruccio. Against our return then, if you insist upon having an answer."

The carriage, with its rich trappings, its high-stepping bays, the colored coachman on the box, rolled with luxuriously easy motion through the sunny drives of Central Park. Leaning back among the cushions, Mrs. Redesdale enjoyed her state, and meeting her companion's eyes, flashed him back a glance of exultant triumph.

"It seems strange, does it not, that we two should be here together after all these years and all these changes, wearing our honors as easily as if they were born with us? You—the one-time proprietor of a pin-and-needle store, I, the daughter of a Canadian basket-maker. Impudence in our case is synonymous with greatness. See all those people bowing to us, and I acknowledge their salutations with such languid grace. Who would imagine that I had ever tramped miles upon miles from town to town, rattling a castanet and begging pennies as I went?"

"O tempora! O mores!" answered the colonel. "Though the degeneracy be even so much to our own advantage! There is old Lynne in his resplendent turnout. We must do him homage at all events, since his golden base is so much more solid than our own."

Mr. Lynne's gaze rested upon and passed over the occupants of the carriage—he had given them the cut direct.

The colonel shut his eyes close, then laughed. "That for my share with his hopeful nephew, I presume. Deuced disagreeable way of exhibiting his disapproval, though. Why, good heavens! Mirette, you are pale as a ghost. You need not care for his cut—people who know him are used to that sort of thing."

Mrs. Redesdale lay back among the cushions again, but the rich color did not return to her cheeks.

"Home," she ordered. "I'm quite tired out. These warm days are enervating, I find." She closed her eyes and did not speak again during the return drive.

It was not Mr. Lynne's cut which had affected her, however. Leaning forward as the colonel announced his approach, her eyes were met and held by the steadfast gaze of another pair—eyes belonging to a pedestrian who was approaching by one of the intersecting paths. A tall, gaunt figure, a bronzed face with flowing beard and close-cut curling hair, glittering like yellow gold in the sunshine, and the eyes which gazed back into hers were blue—blue as the clear sky smiling serenely above them.

Colonel Marquestone hesitated, as she leaned heavily upon him in descending from the carriage.

"Shall I go in, Mirette?—as you say. I can wait until you're ready for your own car. You look worn, don't you? I beg of you, entertain the idea of falling ill at this very important crisis, and do put an end to my misery of waiting."

"Come to-morrow then, at three—not sooner. I have a wretched headache come upon me which will have to be slept off. The important question to both of us shall be decided then."

She went wearily up the velvet-carpeted stairs to her room. It was fitted with lavish disregard of cost, but even here Mrs. Redesdale had restricted her taste, which would have chosen glowing, vivid colors and gorgeous combinations. It lacked the warmth of the crimson and scarlets she liked best, but it was more perfect from an artistic view, and full as well suited to her florid brunette style. The prevailing color was amber—amber-satin hangings, and dark, carved wood furniture, upholstered with the same. There were long mirrors, and tall, white vases, and marble-topped tables, and at one end a wide, low bed, with snowy draperies of lace and silk—a lovely bower fit to inclose incarnate purity.

She sank into a chair and looked over it all—so rich, so perfect—she felt and going to her door-door wraps. In the mellow temperature of the room. Could she give up all this now, just at the moment, too, when she felt herself so secure, when all her plans were working so smoothly to the end she had in view? Give up all?—never!

But that face which had been so vividly distinct before her startled gaze.

"I couldn't—couldn't be baffled now, not even if he has been saved by some incomprehensible miracle. It can't be, though—it is impossible—utterly impossible. And yet—how that face with the staring blue eyes haunts me! It was no faded remembrance—it was too startling, too vivid, too actual. I must be some one intimately related, who wears his very face—the cousin, perhaps—and the look, the expression, may have been drawn by my own horrified gaze. It must have been that."

"If the worst comes, if it be he, I shall not be kept long in suspense. If it is, he will follow me close—I shall certainly know before I sleep to-night."

And there she broke her reflections short, composed her features, and rung for Adele. She was dressed and went down to dinner, and passed the evening afterward much as usual, with that harassing anxiety like a stinging scourge all the while, but well concealed under the smiling mask she had learned to wear.

"It was only a resemblance," she told herself when the evening was over at last. "I shall wait yet until noon to-morrow, and if he has not come then I shall know I am safe—perfectly safe."

Though she had gained confidence, the night passed miserably. The morning followed it, and noon came, and nothing had transpired to further her alarm.

It had been groundless, then—quite. The man she had left on that barren, sandy island in the South Pacific, had not come back to life by some miraculous way to crush her just at the ambition of a lifetime was meeting fulfillment.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 143.)

THE reader has a new treat in store, for we have from Mr. Whittaker's hand a sea and shore romance, which, in several particulars, is one of the most captivating stories that has yet fallen from his delightful pen. It is

THE SEA CAT;
OR,
The Witch of Darien.

A STORY OF THE BUCCANEERS.

In which Morgan, the celebrated Sea Rover and enemy of the Spaniards, plays out an episode in his astonishing career that is literally enthralling as a narration. It may be anticipated with all curiosity and interest, for it will fully answer, in its exciting and thrilling narrative, any expectation formed.

WANDERING THOUGHTS.

BY ST. ELMO.

Far out beyond the starlit sky
My spirit roams this night in June,
While like a crescent hung on high,
Flaunts calmly out the pale white moon;
The fleecy cloudlets soft and still,
Hang low above the wooded hill,
And Silence reigns, while Man's voice,
Though oftentimes sad, will yet rejoice.

Ah, yes, there comes at times some thought,
Though voiceless as the silent night,
With longings half of sadness fraught,
Like some pale star whose magic light
Shines down upon the waveless sea,
Bathed in strains of melody,
Seeming so near and yet so far,
Half hid beneath the azure bar.

Angelic Isles of Memory!
How oft will linger 'round thy shrine,
Memories that no more shall be
The guiding-star of Hope divine!
But deep within the voiceless past,
Their faded embers still will cast
Around the soul a mystic spell,
Where secret thoughts will oftentimes dwell.

I seem to be beside the stream
Where the unconscious leaflets play,
Watching the silver wavelets gleam,
And pure in heart breathe as they;
And thus I feel the perfumed flow'r's
And thus I feel the perfumed flow'r's
And thus I feel the perfumed flow'r's
And thus I feel the perfumed flow'r's

And now the trace of Fancy given,
Savors, ah, yes, too much of Heaven.
Delusive as the Future seems,
I would that I might always sit,
And thus recall the happy dreams,
That through my brain like shadows flit:
And yet, I feel almost alone,
Though the pure stars around me thrown,
Though the pale stars with hazy face
Float restless through the azure space.

How She Made Her Fortune.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"INDEED, I shall not do it. So you may as well consider that settled, Florrie."

Miss Augusta Rane said it in a very decisive way she had at times, and then opened a fresh novel, and began cutting its leaves with her pearl cutter. A very handsome, stylish girl, Gustie Rane was, with her dead-white complexion, ebony-black hair, eyes and lashes, and vividly scarlet lips; quite unlike her sister, Florrie—or "Plorette," as the pet name went. And yet, while one look at Gustie both convinced you she was positively handsome, and satisfied you from looking often, you would see little to attract in Florrie Rane's pale, fair face, pink-tinged cheeks and overlashed eyes—for she had a way of keeping those long, up-curling lashes over her eyes, so that one was some time learning their color.

But when you *did* see them, you wondered at their glory; their radiant, concentrated brightness, tempered with a shadowy pensiveness that made her look, at times, as if unseen things to others were visible to her.

This late winter's afternoon, the girls were waiting for Mr. Rane to come in to dinner. It was growing dark, and with the gas yet unlighted, they had been conversing on a topic that just then absorbed the attention of the Rane family.

"You may be sure I shall never consent to such an immolation. Why, Florrie, here's the season scarcely inaugurated, and bidding fair to be the most brilliant one."

Gustie rose open another page with her impatient fingers that would not wait until the lights would aid her.

"Besides," she went on, half crossly, as though Florrie's quiet, impassive face, just visible in its pure, patient gentleness, across the fast-darkening room, galled her, "who but a lunatic would sacrifice themselves a whole winter in that horrid little two-roomed farmhouse, with a crabbed old woman for a companion, even if there were no attractions elsewhere? I'd not do it for all aunt Mercy's worth."

"I know it will involve a sacrifice—and perhaps greater than you than to me, as I care less for greater than you. Still, there are great considerations to keep even me at home this winter."

Perhaps Gustie wondered at the sudden lowering of her sister's voice, but she did not see the swift, hot blush that reddened all her face.

"Of course there must be considerations to keep you home, Florrie. There are your German and French lessons, and you are so interested in them. Think of all the sewing you expect to do for the family. Florrie, you *can't* go to aunt Mercy."

Florrie smiled to herself, and looked out into the star-lit street, with a half-yearning, half-troubled expression in those wondrous eyes of hers.

Sure enough, Gustie had named several important considerations why she should not go to the Vermont farmhouse, and take care of bed-ridden aunt Mercy—her father's aunt, who had sent such a beseeching appeal for *somebody* to come.

She was thinking not of all this, but of the one reason why she dreaded so to go; she was wondering if John Tresleyan would forget her, when she was gone?

He was not an avowed lover by any means. He was just as devoted to beautiful Gustie as he was to Florrie, and for neither had he ever shown more than strong friendship. But Florrie Rane worshipped the very ground he trod upon; to her he was a very hero, almost a god, and she had learned that his presence, his smile, made eternal springtime in her heart.

He was not at all unworthy her devotion. He was one of those self-made men who had deliberately fought for all the good this world had given him. He was a man who knew how to be chivalrous and appreciative to woman, and still maintain a certain sternness of manner that, in Florrie's eyes, was his greatest charm.

He was hardly handsome; but he was better than that, because his face was a true exponent of his character.

He was very rich—some said John Tresleyan was worth two millions—consequently a "great catch"; but while he went a great deal in company, and was courted and sought after in every circle, no one had ever aspersed him with the title of flirt. And of all places, he liked best to visit at the Ranes; of all women he best liked—one of the Rane girls. Except this last assertion, Florrie was thinking of all I have said of John Tresleyan, as she sat there in the dark room, a delicious thrill at her heart as she wondered if she would win him. Then, with one rude, though unconscious blow, her blissful reverie was forever banished.

It was Gustie's voice that spoke—in a lower, tender tone than Florrie ever had observed before.

"I have one great objection to going, Florrie—may I make you my confidant? shall I tell you it is because it would break my heart—yes, kill me, Florrie, to be parted from—from—Mr. Tresleyan?"

So low, so charmingly tender, came the name from Gustie's lips to Florrie's ears; then her heart gave a great leap, as though it was for

life; her eyes seemed suddenly transformed to balls of living fire—what! what! was Gustie, too, staking her all on John Tresleyan's love?

"Poor, poor Florrie! she sat like a statue, till the silence almost suffocated her."

"Do you love him so?" she said at length, in a hoarse, unnatural voice.

"Do I love him?" said Gustie echoed the words so passionately, there was no further need of affirmation.

Just then Mr. Rane came up the steps, and Florrie slipped out to order the gas lighted.

When she returned, she sat down behind the tea-urn, a little smile on her lips, a faint pallor on her face, and a deathly, grinding agony at her heart.

"Papa, I will go to aunt Mercy's, to-morrow, for the winter."

So Florrie Rane went away from home.

A one-and-a-half-storied cottage, called by courtesy, "the farm-house," because of the ten acres of land belonging to it; a rather picturesque sort of cot, Florrie Rane imagined it might be in the summer, when morning-glory vines could be trained from ground to roof, and a running rose made to grow over the little latticed front porch.

She was standing on that little brown porch on a bleak November morning, looking up at the leaden, snow-laden clouds with her pain-fraught eyes, and wondering if, among all the lonesome retirement of that hillside retreat, she could learn to forget?

Already she had been a fortnight with aunt Mercy and her one little servant maid; and it had been a period of such vain striving after peace, such wild struggling for a victory, that, at times, she verily thought she must die for love of John Tresleyan; John Tresleyan, who, of course, as the most natural consequence in the world, would give his love to beautiful Gustie, rather than to her. Aunt Mercy had noticed the unrest, and when, in her half-kind, half-querulous way, had asked the reason why, been answered by a stammering excuse and a vivid blush. But aunt Mercy had found out, by observation and acute womanly perception, very nearly where and what the trouble was, and she resolved to give her niece the benefit of them.

"It's all fol-de-rol to be pining to death over a man, child," she said, with blunt kindness, one day, when Florrie, as usual, brought her sewing to sit with the invalid. "It's a sheer waste of time and talents; and there's a plenty of men left, better, a deal, than the one you are losing your heart over. I know one in particular—the finest man that ever breathed."

A little incredulous smile lurked, for a moment, around Florrie's lips—that aunt Mercy could compare *any* one with John Tresleyan. Aunt Mercy saw the smile, and answered, not a little resentfully:

"Indeed, my Edward is a second to no living man, and when you once see him, you'll say so, too. He comes often to see me, and it's about time for another visit."

Florrie's heart sunk at the prospect of this model man's coming, and she inwardly resolved to keep out of the way when he did come; and then composed herself to listen to aunt Mercy's eulogiums.

"She's the noblest girl that ever lived, Edward, I tell you that, and you know I never lied."

The gentleman laughed at the old lady's earnestness.

"That's so, amtie, and I only wish I could accommodate you by making love to your favorite. But, you see, I am, or rather hope to be, engaged to another young lady before long."

Aunt Mercy looked over her steel-bowed glasses in keen contempt.

"You don't mean that! Why, I had it all out and dried ever since I found my poor little Florrie was so heartbroken over that bear of a 'John' who is to marry her sister, Gustie—proud, stuck-up—why, Edward Tresleyan, what's the matter? are you gone clean daff?"

For the gentleman had suddenly arisen to his feet, and stood, staring in mute amazement.

"Aunt Mercy, can my Florrie Rane be here? Where is she? Nobody told me she was here."

"Humph! your Florrie, eh? well, upon my word, if I don't believe you are the very man, after all! Well, there, am I a-getting childish then? I forgot your name was John Edward?"

There was a grave smile on Mr. John Tresleyan's face.

"I only know I wondered where Florrie had gone and why. They said on a visit to her aunt, and I thought—I thought—maybe she left home to avoid me. Aunt Mercy, can I see her?"

An hour later, all flushes and smiles, Florrie showed aunt Mercy her engagement ring.

And in the path of duty she found a reward.

The Effects of Tobacco.—A writer in the *London Spectator* thinks tobacco has a property belonging to very few substances, which makes its use exceptionally dangerous—the property, when administered in an overdose, of effecting some permanent change, probably in the spinal cord, which renders the victim forever liable to injury from the minutest doses. Cases are quoted from Dr. Druben's work on tobacco. Mr. T., a lawyer, thirty years of age, of athletic frame, for five years had shown symptoms of a spinal affection, which had resisted all remedies. On the recommendation of Dr. Druben, he gave up the use of tobacco, in which he had indulged to excess. The result was that "all the symptoms disappeared, as if by enchantment, and at the end of one month the cure was complete." One day, dining with the doctor, he indulged himself, contrary to the earnest remonstrance of the former, in a cigar. No sooner had he finished the second one than he felt that all his old sensations had returned. Warned by this decisive intimation, the gentleman henceforth entirely gave up his cigar, took tonics for a month, and has ever since enjoyed excellent health. The second case was that of a person who felt his energies declining, lost his appetite, and only found comfort in smoking very strong cigars. He complained of acute pain in the region of his stomach every afternoon, which only ceased at night; trembling of the limbs, palpitation, and sometimes sickness. On his relinquishing the use of tobacco for one month, all the symptoms disappeared; but, preferring the pleasure from tobacco to health, he resumed its use, and had in return a renewal of all his pains. In the third case, the patient, aged forty-five years, extremely sober and very regular, in all his habits, was troubled by the premonitory symptoms of melancholy mania. He was perfectly aware of his hallucinations, but could not escape them. After two or three weeks' medical treatment, during which he felt no desire to use tobacco, these symptoms passed away—but they returned as soon as he resumed his cigar. Admonished by this experience, he renounced tobacco entirely, and from that day has had no recurrence of the symptoms. Other cases of a similar character are brought under the notice of physicians. The most determined devotee of tobacco who takes an overdose, or uses a much larger quantity than usual, will suffer more or less severely, and not only at the time, but at intervals afterward.

SONG.

BY GEORGE.

How swift the years have flown, my love,
Since one dear silvery night!
How cold and still the ice-bound lake
Lies there beneath our light;
And overhead, in jeweled sky,
The queenly moon did stand—
Oh, 'twas the holy, blessed hour
My love gave me her hand!
But not alone her dainty hand—
She gave her heart so true,
Oh, soothing hand, oh, gentle heart,
This song I sing for you!
Long may the heavens smile upon
The vows we spoke that night;
I bless the hand, I love the heart—
God keep them true and light!

Nina Bernardo.

BY NELL GWYNNE.

A STORY—tell you a story of my own life?
Is that what you say, little Blossom? My life's
history? It will not make you smile—it may
make you weep—for I must take you backward
with me, not through pleasant summer fields,
but through gray vales and shadows, over rough
rocks, across turbid, swollen waters, on whose
swelling waves and rolling billows all my life's
beauty and brightness were well-nigh stranded.
And, although the tangled ends have grown
smooth and straight, some of the threads were
broken on the journey, and their memory still
throws its shadows over me. But, no matter
what it was, you shall hear it:

Fifteen years ago, a little homeless outcast
child wandered alone through the streets of a
great city, with the glint of Southern suns on
her wavy hair and the mellow accents of Italy
on her trembling lips.

All day long she trudged through the cold,
cheerless streets, gazing yearningly at the pass-
ing glimpses of warmth and brightness which
she could see through the brilliant shop win-
dows, smiling sometimes at the happy faces of
the children as they played together, forgetting
for the moment, in the light of their happiness,
her own cold and hunger. And then the night
came down black and dusky, and the wind
blew in fitful storm-gusts, and as she thought
of the drear darkness of the broad, noisy streets,
and the weird forms and scowling faces of the
men who ever and anon flitted by, a great fear
fell upon her and she longed to fly away far
from the great city, where she could be at rest.
And then she remembered that she had
passed in the morning a bridge over a deep,
smooth river, and she had thought of home and
how sweet it would be to sail far away on this
broad, shimmering sea to her own bright and
genial land, where there was sunshine un-
fading and warmth and beauty alike for the rich
and poor, the happy and the outcast. And so,
rattling her scanty clothing around her and
battling with the wind, which seemed freezing
the blood in her veins, she retraced her weary
steps till she had left the city far behind; and,
looking back, she could see tiny lights peeping
out here and there, and she thought of the
happy homes and the happy little children
nestling in their mothers' arms, and wondered
dreamily why she had neither home nor mo-
ther. And then, turning, she saw the deep, sil-
ent river rolling beneath; and, as she advanced
and clung to the massive stone parapet that
overlooked it, she thought how quiet and
peaceful it was—this dark river—in the broad-
ing shadow of the night.

And then, creeping step by step, nearer, near-
er, a species of fascination impelling her, till
she merely clung to a ledge of rock, she looked
down, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, save the
ceaseless sob and sigh of the waves as they
licked the sides of the bridge. And then breath-
ing a little sighing prayer that the dear Christ-
child would receive her, she would have loosed
her hold and found rest and peace in the wintry
waves; but, just as the tiny, frozen fingers re-
leased their grasp, a strong, firm arm was
thrown around the passive childish figure, and
a voice, which trembled in spite of its an-
nouncement, said: "Thank God, I was just in time."
From this hour Nina Bernardo's life began.
Opening as it had on a world of want and suf-
fering, it was a child's nature, without child-
ishness. Once removed to an atmosphere of love
and refinement, it developed in all sweetness
and womanly grace and loveliness, for she had
found in her preserver not only a savior of her
body, but one who rescued this suffering, trampled
child-soul from an abyss of darkness blacker
far than death—the cause of sin and igno-
rance—for, in a word, Heaven had given to this
outcast child in Philip Ingraham—her truest,
her best, her only friend—her savior, her preserver,
her protector.

Philip Ingraham was one of the few men
who, while in the world and of it, had yet
preserved himself undefiled by its touch. His
was a great, broad, genial nature, sweet to
its inmost core, susceptible to all generous impulses,
tolerant of all men. He took this little one of
earth's tired travelers to his own home—he, the
world-weary man, finding a new sensation in
the almost hourly development of this young
mind, which, as its latent powers awoke, dis-
covered to him an inexhaustible pleasure. And
thus Nina Bernardo's childhood passed, develop-
ing rapidly, sweetly, as the flower opens to the
gentle ray of the sun, under the tender guidance
of her preserver. And when at length the
child was a child no longer, but a woman, with
a woman's nature and a woman's heart, it
seemed but little marvel, so gradually had it
grown with her growth, this strange, sweet pas-
sion, when one day a secret was revealed to her
and the woman knew herself—knew that she
had taken unto her heart an idol, and that idol
Philip Ingraham—her savior, guardian, and she
whispered it softly—her master. In silence and
humility, her woman's heart gaining each day
new capabilities for loving and suffering, the
girl nurtured this new-found love born of her
womanhood, which was augmented an hundred
fold by its secrecy. And when at length Philip
Ingraham gathered her to his strong, tender
heart, telling her that her love compared
with his own was but as weakness is to strength,
as woman's nature is to man's, asking her to be
his wife, she felt that Heaven had been too
kind, and prayed that she might die in his arms
close to his heart ere its brightness should
vanish. They were married—these two, who
had given their hearts to each other, with no
pomp of worldly show—but secretly; for Philip
Ingraham's was a proud name, and he, the only
son and heir, must bring no obscure and dowry-
less maiden, however beautiful, to bear the
honors of his haughty house. And so, after a
short time, during which Nina saw once more
the sunny land of her birth, Philip Ingraham
brought his young wife home to the stately
quiet mansion, where he had spent his bachelor-
hood, and to which he had taken the little or-
phan on that first bitter night, and where had
passed the happy flitting days of her childhood.

But little cared Nina. Happy and trusting
in the devoted worship of her husband, and lov-
ing him for love's sweet sake alone, with no
alloy of ambition, of worldliness, she forgot the
world in a life of almost delicious sweetness.
But it might not last. For, however bright,
is but a flickering ray which illuminates our
pathway for a brief way only to make the

darkness more palpable when it is gone out.
So it proved with Nina Ingraham. Closer and
closer the serpent came to her paradise;
thoughtlessly she watched it and knew it not
till its trail had passed over her soul and left it
to its sickness. One day Philip came home to
her from that great world outside, whose hum
and bustle seemed to her, shut out from it all,
but the echo of a troubled dream, and with him
came one—a man—his friend and kinsman—
whom Philip had brought to see his pure pearl,
his chief treasure. A man with the face of a
god, the heart of a fiend, he had brought a wolf
into his dove-cot, but he knew it not. And
Nina, alike reckless, accepted the homage, the
unvalued admiration of this handsome stranger
with the unaffected pleasure of a pure and
guileless nature—suspecting naught of wrong,
naught of sin; for was not he Philip's kinsman
and dearest friend, and was she not Philip's
wife? Ah, there was her sure rock of safety!
At this time Philip was called much away from
home, and who, during his absence, so fitted to
be the friend and counselor of his young and
inexperienced wife as his own tried and trusted
friend? And so the shadow thickened and
lengthened around Nina Ingraham. He began
—this false friend of Philip Ingraham's—with
his plausible words, his specious flatteries, to
spread his net slowly, cautiously—first with
playful hints that held a deeper meaning than
at first appeared; later, with open accusations
against him the hem of whose garments he was
unworthy to touch, telling the unsuspecting
girl-wife of that gay world in which her hus-
band was the bright star, the social magnet
toward whom all honor and adulation turned,
and bidding her, ere she had lost it, look well to
the fealty of him who had promised to love and
cherish her until death. Closer and nearer the
serpent's fangs fastened themselves into her
quivering heart—wider and deeper spread the
poison through her veins until Nina Ingraham's
soul was one abyss of despairing darkness.

She loved Philip Ingraham, her husband, not
with the smooth, passive, negative affection
of weaker women who find other outlets to
their nature—hers was the growth and develop-
ment of her inmost self—the one single passion
of her lifetime; no quiet, rippling stream of
wifely or sisterly devotion, but a mountain top,
rearing, reaching, bursting all barriers that
should come between her and her love. Did he
but love her—but this man, this false hypocrite
strove to her that Philip Ingraham's heart was
another's; that she, his faithful, loving wife, was
but his tool, his plaything of an hour; that to
the world he would soon give a wife worthy to
reign over his home as well as his heart, and
that his marriage with Nina Bernardo, the out-
cast pauper girl, was but a form, an imposition,
a lie, bidding her substantiate her right to
Philip Ingraham's name and home before the
world, and receive from her judges the brand
of adventuress, or worse, upon her pure brow.

Poor, tortured heart! Poor, burning brain!
She listened—she listened and believed; but
when he, the black-hearted tempter, would have
offered to her his aching soul the bliss, the
brightness of which Philip Ingraham had de-
fraded her; would have filled Philip Ingra-
ham's place at her side and in her heart; when
he painted to her, in glowing words and loving
accents, the home to which he would bear her,
where, in southern lands, in her own bright
Italy, together they would forget, in a life of
unfading love, the world and its treachery—the
woman's pride, the woman's innate purity,
asserted themselves, and with horror she drove
the sh-sh-sh-sh serpent from her sight; for,
though insulted, forsaken, discarded, she was
still Philip Ingraham's wife, and by no act, no
sin of hers, would she wound and dishonor the
heart that had been so tender, so loving to the
helpless orphan child. No; if he had forgot-
ten his love, had thrown aside his allegiance—if
he was weary of her, she would go away; she
would be a burden no longer, but she would go
out from her home—out from her happiness—
out from her husband—sinless, stainless, in all
honor and purity. She waited for no parting
words, no parting recriminations. Her idol was
shattered—she would never seek to gather up
the fragments. She had come in from the
streets to his home, a weary, footsore pauper
child; into the streets she went again, a hope-
less, heart-sick woman, with one aim, one wild,
consuming prayer—never to see Philip Ingra-
ham's face, never to hear his voice again.
How the bitter days that followed dragged
themselves on, Nina Ingraham never knew—
for weeks she lay in a blessed oblivion; and
could the turbid, tangled life have ended then,
she had found cause of thankfulness; but fate
decreed otherwise. When she awoke again to
reason, she was surrounded by gentle voices,
kind faces. "Home," her friends said, "re-
ceived her. They have found—these sweet sis-
ters of mercy—a woman, young and fair, dy-
ing in the streets at night; they took her in,
thinking her one of God's lost little ones. They
fed her, they clothed her; they cast no stone at
her, and when her tedious convalescence was
over, they put a staff in her hand and scrip in
her purse, and bade her God-speed on her jour-
ney."

She found in exchange for the peaceful home
she had left a dingy attic room, in which she
toiled over her needle, by day and night, to
gain the pittance which sufficed to sustain her
life. But she never dreamed that Philip Ingra-
ham had never known the meaning of
toil, and slowly, but surely, she felt her strength
waning, when chance (or it may be Providence
—who shall say?) opened a gate of escape.

One day as she bent wearily over her needle,
her thoughts far away from the dusty attic
room, with its single window through which
the sunlight never ventured, she forgot the
dreary present, the bitter, sorrowful past,
and the rich sweet voice that had been
wont to make melody and sunshine in Philip
Ingraham's home, swept through the room
in a tender love-song. Rich, full, sweet as
wood notes wild, it rung through the house
and down into the narrow streets below. A
stranger passing, paused to listen to the un-
wonted melody in such a quarter, and charmed
at the depth and power of the voice, craved ad-
mittance to its owner. It was granted, and to
make a long story short, this stranger was the
agent of an Italian Opera Troupe, and dis-
covering a new source of wealth in the face and
voice of the fair young singer, he was not slow
to offer Nina flattering and lucrative terms,
should she consent to become a *debutante* under
his management. With joy Nina accepted his
proposition, hailing with delight a change
which, fraught with excitement and novelty,
promised oblivion of the past.

To her new life she went with brave, if weary
and hopeless heart, studying with an energy and
determination that were resistless—and when,
after an almost incredibly short space of time,
she was pronounced fitted for her new and un-
tried position, she made her debut.
Fortune, seconded by her own indomitable
and restless will favored her. The beautiful young
cantatrice, who received with indifference and
coldness the admiration and delighted plaudits
of thousands, was welcomed with rapturous ap-
plause as a new and matchless star in the mu-
sical firmament. Connoisseurs raved over the
irresistible sweetness and purity of her full,
mezzo-soprano voice; and women, with hushed
breath, wept at its exquisite pathos and the not

less touchingly lovely face of the young prima
donna.

The months flew by, bringing to Nina Ingra-
ham fresher laurels and more glowing encomi-
ums, but each hour, each additional triumph on-
ly saw her heart grow more hopeless within
her, for in spite of the novelty and excitement
incident to her new life and surroundings,
peace refused to visit the sick chambers of her
soul, even as in a regretful dream she seemed to
see the happy, restful home she had deserted,
and the loving, tender heart her one rash act
had so recklessly broken; for when once the
final fierce storm of wounded love and bitter
resentment had subsided, Nina Ingraham knew
the foul lie, the black imposition, which the
guilty love and unscrupulous passion of a fiend-
like heart had practiced upon her innocence and
credulity; and in anguish and vain regrets she
acquitted Philip Ingraham, the brave, tender
hero of her childhood, the lover-husband of her
womanhood.

But this tardy justice, these vain regrets had
come too late; these months of suffering taught
her that Philip Ingraham would never receive
to his home again the wife who had left it in si-
lence and secrecy; and alas he might believe—
in sin. No; it was too late; she had gone for-
ward into the deep waters, and they had closed
upon her. Night after night as she stood be-
fore the footlights, clad in rich robes, and
gleaming jewels, the glittering symbols of her
misery, her eyes would wander restlessly up
and down the rows of faces that confronted her,
seeking but one form, longing, yet dreading,
that she should see her false triumphs, her real
abasement, but no glimpse of the beloved face
greeted her; and soon after, in some fugitive
paper, she read of Philip Ingraham's departure
for the Continent. The engagement into
which Nina Ingraham had entered, on embrac-
ing her profession, would soon expire. The
last night had come, and a brilliant assemblage
hastened to hear the farewell notes of this their
sweetest song-bird. She was to sing for the
first time only ballads, and there was a tremu-
lous silence through the hall as the young
songstress came forward to the footlights. She
commenced with a plaintive little English bal-
lad, so sweet, so indescribably tender in its
sweetness, so full of equally painful pathos,
that the woman's soul seemed fading away in
its lingering cadences. Once she paused and
raised her pitiful eyes to the stalls above.
There was a start, a quiver ran through the
slight form, and then the woman sprang for-
ward, and kneeling with her white arms extend-
ed, sung, in a voice that was wild in its pas-
ionate sweetness and longing, the concluding
lines of her song:

Could you come back to me,
In the old likeness that I knew,
To be so faithful, tender and true!

She had seen a face so noble, so worn and
suffering and yet so patient, with a half gleam
of recognition in the deep eyes—the face stand-
ing forth vividly distinct from this sea of
strangeness. She saw it for one moment, and
then there was a stir, a hum of many voices, as
of the rushing in of waters; the great multitude
seemed bearing down upon her and shutting
out from her gaze that face with its look of
mute pain; and then with one long, wailing cry,
Nina Ingraham fell swooning to the floor.
When she again opened her eyes to conscious-
ness, a quiet, peaceful scene greeted her—a
room that seemed strangely familiar to her, like
the lingering shadows of a dream. Sweet and
tender memories seemed springing up out of
corners, and shadows, ghosts of a long-dead
past, nodded and beckoned to her and smiled
a welcome through the ray of sunlight that
stole in through the closed blinds. A delicious
languor stole over her. She was forgetting it all
when—hark! a step sounded outside that sent
the blood surging back in wild, tumultuous
waves to her heart—a step that came nearer
and nearer, cautiously, softly, lest it should
waken a sleeper; a hand drew the curtain gently
aside and admitted a face, in which there was
no sorrow or sadness, in whose eyes there was
no reproach or anger—a man's face, so glad, so
exultantly joyful, so tenderly loving and for-
giving; and with her head close to Philip Ingra-
ham's loving, compassionate heart, Nina
Ingraham knew that the turbid, angry waters
had lashed themselves still; that the night and
blackness were over; that after the storm, peace
had come at last.

And now, my Blossom, there is no more to
tell of my life's history. You have turned back-
ward and read with me each one of its tattered
pages. A portion of it you knew before;
how Philip, my husband, sought out the villain,
his false friend, whose treachery had struck the
death-blow upon his happiness; how he wronged
from him a confession of his guilt and the inno-
cence of her whom he had so foully deceived;
how he took again to his heart the world-weary,
repentant woman, with the same love and ten-
der pity he had given to the outcast orphan girl.
Safe in the shelter of his love she rests peace-
ful, hopeful, trusting not in her own strength,
but looking with all humility to a Power that
is unfailing; happy with a happiness that pass-
eth all understanding, for before God and man
she is Philip Ingraham's loved and honored
wife.

The Red Queen.

A ROMANCE OF OLD FORT DU QUESNE.

BY BARTLEY T. CAMPBELL.

AUTHOR OF "IN THE WEB," "LAURA'S PERIL," ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TEST OF LOVE.

On the arrival of Bella Carlyon and her par-
ents at the fort, the former was conveyed to a
sumptuous apartment in the north wing, while
the old folks were forced to take up their abode
in the guard-house, which was provided with
iron-grated windows, and from which escape
was impossible.

Bella begged to be allowed to share the
gloomy den with those she loved so dearly, but
Joucaire had ordered otherwise, and no one
within the fortifications dared to disobey his
slightest command.

On the second day of her imprisonment, the
French colonel entered her apartments and
greeted her kindly.

"How does my fair visitor like Du Quesne?"
he asked.

"As well as could be expected," was the re-
ply. "Colonel Joucaire, I am surprised that
you should treat us so, after all your protesta-
tions of friendship. I thought you were an
honorable gentleman."

"And so I am, Mademoiselle Carlyon; but I
have my duty to perform, and I can not allow
your father to shelter spies, and plot against my
king, under my very nose."

"Spies, sir?" returned the girl. "I don't com-
prehend you."

"But I understand myself, thoroughly," re-
plied Joucaire. "Do you mean to deny, that,
on the night before last, you gave shelter to
a young Marylander, who is now acting as a
spy for Forbes—Ashmore, I believe they call
him?"

"I will not deny that Mr. Ashmore was at
my father's house, but I do say he was not
there as a spy—simply as a friend of our family."

"Well, we'll try him for a spy, at any rate,"
said the commandant, with a grim smile.

"Try him! He is not a prisoner, sir. You
will have to capture him before you bring him
to trial," answered Bella, defiantly.

"Ah, we will, will we?" and again Joucaire
smiled, this time triumphantly. "Now, know
you, Miss, that you are slightly mistaken. We
have him already."

"What! you don't mean to say that Robert
Ashmore is a prisoner?"

"That's what I mean to swear to, if neces-
sary."

"I don't believe it!"

"Then just glance out there. Do you see
that man tied to your walnut tree?"

Bella glanced out of the window, and then
her heart stood still with a numb pain, and she
sunk upon her knees at Joucaire's feet.

"Oh, sir! he is not a spy—indeed he is not!"
she cried. "You will not murder him, for—"

"I would do any thing for your sake," an-
swered the polite Frenchman; "but according
to military law, he must die."

She covered lower at his feet, and begged of
him, in piteous accents, to spare Robert Ash-
more's life.

His heart was touched by her grief, still he
could not surrender without conditions. Finally,
he said:

"Mademoiselle Carlyon, I love you dearly—
with a passion stronger than you can even im-
agine. Now, I will grant your prayer, if you
promise to become my wife."

She only moaned in answer and shook her
head negatively.

"You will let this young man perish, then,
when one word from you would save him?"
urged Joucaire.

"Oh, no, no! He must not die!" exclaimed
Bella, stretching out her hands imploringly.

"But he will die at sunrise, unless you take
compassion on him."

"At sunrise to-morrow?" asked the weeping
girl.

"Yes; at sunrise to-morrow."

"Then give me until morning to consider,"
replied Bella. "I can not answer now."

He consented to this, and bidding her fare-
well, he withdrew.

During all the remainder of that day, Bella
Carlyon sobbed and bewailed her fate. From
an old Frenchwoman, who came to wait upon
her, she learned that Captain Ashmore had
been placed in a subterranean cell beneath the
officers' quarters, and that a court-martial had
already condemned him to death.

This confirmation of Joucaire's words assured
her that his threat would also be carried into
execution, unless she would sacrifice herself to
his passion. It was a terrible dilemma to be
placed in, and all Bella could do was to fall up-
on her knees and pray to God for pity and
strength to bear the trying ordeal.

At last night came, throwing its great black
mantle over forest and fort, and settling down
upon the waters of the three rivers, like an
ominous pall.

From her window Bella could see the lights
twinkling in the officers' quarters, and far over
the ramparts, on the Allegheny shore, an In-
dian camp-fire blazed brightly. The dull,
heavy tread of the sentry beneath her window,
and the occasional scream of some night-bird,
were all the sounds that came to her ears. Worn
out with watching, and weary with thinking,
she at length fell asleep, with her head upon
the ledge of the window.

How long she slept she knew not; but, when
she opened her eyes, they fell upon a dark fig-
ure, crouched by her side.

Terrified, she was about to cry out, when a
hand was placed over her mouth, and a voice,
whose accents were very familiar, said:

"For God's sake, Miss Carlyon, don't scream.
I come to save you. I am Tennesaw, the pro-
phet."

She realized the situation at once, and con-
trolling herself with an effort, asked:

"How did you get in here?"

"I am a prophet—the winds are not more
free than I am," he answered. "I control ev-
ery Indian in Du Quesne. They dare not deny
my admittance anywhere. But, Miss, this is no
time for explanations. I come to save you."

"But Robert—I would rather you would
save Robert," she said.

"It is impossible to reach him now," was the
answer.

"But he dies at sunrise."

"I know that is the programme, and his
friends have provided for the emergency. But
come, time is precious; it is almost daylight."

Saying this, Tennesaw threw a cloak around
Bella's shoulders, placed a cowl upon her head,
and producing a long cord and crucifix, tied the
former around her supple waist, and suffered
the cross to depend almost to her knee.

"You are to pass for a Franciscan friar,"
whispered Tennesaw. "Come on."

Without a word being spoken by either, they
stepped out into the dark corridor, and from
thence into the parade-ground.

"Halt! Who goes there?" demanded the
sentinel, whose tread Bella had listened to so
long.

"Friar Paul, going to see Baptiste Relout;
he is dying," answered Tennesaw.

The sentinel glanced at the bowed figure—at
the cowl and cross, and then said, "Pass on."

They stepped out into the moonlight, and
she was about to speak out her satisfaction,
when Tennesaw whispered: "Not yet, Miss
Carlyon; we have to pass another; keep cool,
and do not speak."

Fifty yards further on and they were again
halted, when the same story was told by the
prophet, and again they were bidden to "Pass
on."

A few minutes' rapid walk, and then Tennesaw
said:

"Our way is along the Monongahela; you
are safe now, and need be under no apprehen-
sion."

Ten minutes more and the fugitives entered
the camp of Allequippa, and at once pro-
ceeded to her tent.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE COVERING GUARD.

WHEN the Indian Queen met Bella, her
black, eyes blazed for an instant with an in-
tense, fierce fire; then she advanced a step, and
said:

"The pale-face is pretty as the morning; her
hair is like the gold of sunset, and she should
be happy."

Bella accepted the hand outstretched to her,
and replied: "I am very unhappy—very un-
happy."

"Why are your eyes cast down? Why is
your heart heavy?"

"Because my friends are in danger."

"He shall be free," replied Allequippa, clutch-
ing her rifle. "I have sworn it."

"But if you fail?" said Bella.

"Fail?" exclaimed the young princess. "I
may die, but I will not fail."

"The daughter of the great Shingiss should
put her faith in Maneto, the Great Spirit. He
alone can give the eagle victory over the wolf,"
put in Tennesaw.

"I have asked Maneto to aid me," replied Al-
lequippa, "and I have asked him to keep me
from hating this pale lily, who has taken my

lover from me. He has heard my prayer, and
she shall be my sister."

Bella felt for the first time how much more
dear was that poor forest child's love than even
her own strong passion, and so she said:

"You are a noble, good girl, and you shall,
indeed, be my sister."

An hour later and the camp was full of busi-
ness, the watch-fires were extinguished, and two
hundred Mingo braves, with Allequippa at their
head, began their march on Du Quesne.

On, on they went, like grim shadows, crawl-
ing now under the thick brush, and anon stalk-
ing silently through the rank grass, which grew
close to the water's edge.

Tennesaw and two stalwart braves were in
advance. As soon as they reached the entrance
to the fort, the former straightened himself up
and boldly stepped forward.

The guard halted him promptly, and Tennesaw
saw the countersign at once.

"Back—eh?" remarked the sentinel, lower-
ing his weapon.

"Yes, Baptiste is dead," answered the pro-
phet; then, as the guard turned his back, Tennesaw
threw the corner of his blanket over his
head, and, with a mighty effort, hurled him to
the ground.

Two braves were upon him at once, and
dragged him, bound and gagged, back into the
ditch which surrounded the works.

This accomplished, Tennesaw stole along in
the shadow of the officer's quarters, until the
next guard was reached. He was a slim, weakly
man, and was overpowered in a like manner
without arousing the garrison or creating the
least noise.

Tennesaw now entered the tallest building,
with catlike tread, and opened a small iron door
in the wall of the first room on the right of the
main hall. Crushing himself through this, he
descended into a vault, dark as Erebus, and
then he paused, and called out, in a low, hoarse
voice:

"Ashmore!"

There was a rustle in the opposite corner of
the vault, and Robert Ashmore's voice asked:

"Who calls?"

"Hush—sh! not a whisper!" replied Tennesaw.
"I have come to save you."

"Is that the prophet?" queried Robert.

"Yes, come on!"

Ashmore groped his way forward, and soon
had the satisfaction of grasping Tennesaw by
the hand.

The two men never spoke a word, but, creep-
ing up the stairs, soon found themselves in the
hall above.

Men's voices were heard on the parade ground,
and our two friends soon discovered that they
were speaking French.

"Tis the relief guard," said Tennesaw; "we
have no time to lose. They will soon learn of
the disappearance of the sentinels, and give the
alarm."

"What do you propose?" asked Robert.

"We must make a dash for the sally-port.
If we can reach that, we are safe."

"But they will pursue," interrupted the
young man.

It was a beautiful morning; the sun arose red and brilliant, and the trees were alive with feathered songsters piping their lays.

"Oh, Robert, I'm very tired," Bella said; "I fear I can not go much further."

"Keep up your courage," whispered the young man; "there is a cabin close by, and we will stop there for rest and refreshment."

"Is it a white man's cabin?" asked Bella.

"Yes; an Irishman named Frazier occupies it. He is friendly to our cause—in fact, he has a son with Forbes, and we may obtain some information here of the whereabouts of the General."

Fifteen minutes more and Frazier's cabin was reached.

The old gentleman gave the twain a cordial reception, saying, "Troth an' ye can rest yourselves here until Forbes comes, and that won't be very long, for a scout who left his lines yesterday told me that the old General would be here to-night."

This was good news to the fugitives, and made them relish the substantial breakfast which Mrs. Frazier placed before them a few minutes later.

As they sat they informed Paddy Frazier of the incidents of the previous night.

"An' do ye think the Frinch an' Injuns will be able to hould their own against the Mingoes?" he asked at length.

"Certainly," replied Robert; "in fact, I expect to see our red friends pass here in full retreat before noon."

"Oh, murder in Erin, but that's hard enough, anyway," exclaimed Mary Frazier, the good wife of Paddy; "and there's Allequippa, God bless her, and it's meself would be sorry to hear that she came to evil."

"And so would I," exclaimed Robert, earnestly. "She has been my good angel on more occasions than one, and but that my heart is so completely another's I would win the dusky beauty for my own."

Bella blushed, but did not speak, and Paddy Frazier began to regale the ears of his guests with a full history of his advent into the wilderness and of the wonderful power Tennessee, the prophet, exercised over the Indians.

"Sure, he's no more an Injun than I am myself, an' that's none at all," he said; "but sure, the Injuns think he's God's agent, and that's why he can wrap them round his finger like tow yarn. An' troth an' it's many a time he's saved this shanty from the torch, and these gray hairs from the scalp-knife."

"He has been very kind to me as well," said Bella, "and has given me a great many fine presents and rare books. He would never tell me where he got them either. He is a very strange man."

"Yes, very strange," replied Robert; "but he promised to tell me his story, some day, and I'm a little curious to know it."

These words had scarce been uttered when Tennessee stalked into the room.

"Well, what news?" cried Robert, rising from the table.

"We have made a hard fight, but as I predicted, have been forced to retreat."

"Where is Allequippa?" asked Bella, nervously.

"She is encamped in the Youghiogany," replied Tennessee. "They are singing the death-song now for the twenty braves they lost last night."

"I will go and see her at once," said Robert. "But are your adversaries in pursuit still?"

"No," answered Tennessee. "They have fled into Du Quesne to prepare for Forbes who is now marching down the Yough."

"That is good news, at least," ejaculated Robert, as he walked out of the open doorway, turning only at the threshold to wave a kind adieu to Bella.

After walking a short distance he paused to listen to the low, melancholy chant, which came up from the ravine close to the water's edge.

He knew it was the Mingoes bewailing the loss of their slain, and the low tremula and exquisite sadness of the song touched his heart.

"Poor fellows," he said, "they died to save me from death."

"And Allequippa's heart is sad because she could not die with them."

The voice belonged to the Queen of the Mingoes, and turning around Robert stood face to face with Allequippa.

"And I am glad to see you alive," said Robert, "if only to express my gratitude to you."

She turned away her face.

"You are not angry with me?" he said. "I would give any thing to please you."

"You have given to the pale-face the only thing Allequippa would have."

"And what is that?"

"Your love."

He did not answer, and after a pause she continued:

"I am Queen of the mighty Mingoes; my hunting-grounds stretch over three days' journey; when I call my children to battle, the winds carry my words, and the leaves turn pale with terror. The daughter of the noble Shingis has been loved by many a brave chief, but she would not listen to any tongue, until you came. You spoke no loving words; you asked not Allequippa for her love, but she gave it to you without asking, and now that you do not love her she wants to die."

Her words were spoken in a low, sad voice, and when she had finished speaking, Robert said:

"You are a good, noble girl, and worthy of any man's love; you will soon forget me, and be happy again."

She started as if stung by an adder.

"No!" she cried; "the white chief does not know Allequippa. She only loves once. From this day the trail will be lonely, the hunt cheerless, and the hours long and heavy."

He did not speak when she paused, and then she eagerly:

"We will part now. Your trail is toward the rising, mine toward the setting sun."

She turned away, but only walked a few paces, then she rushed into Robert's outstretched arms and walked into the anguish that was in her heart.

They stood thus for some time; at last, Allequippa dashed the tears from her eyes and fled down the forest path toward the camp.

CHAPTER XX.

LOVE'S GREAT OFFERING.

When she was gone, Robert felt very miserable, and instead of pushing on to the camp at once, as he originally intended, he sat down there where they had parted, and began to think of the past, which now appeared so strange to him.

The bright, fresh sunlight streamed through the interlacing branches, and fell in quivering patches here and there, growing brighter and warmer as the day advanced, and still Robert Ashmore sat there, full of pity and tenderness sympathy for that poor forest queen who loved him so madly.

Finally he arose, and turned his steps toward Frazier's cabin. He had only gone a short distance when he was startled by the sound of approaching footsteps, and the next instant Allequippa, panting like a chased fawn, bounded through a dense thicket to the right of the trail.

Robert was pursuing and leaped into his arms. She had scarcely done so, when the sharp re-

port of a firearm awoke the echoes of those forest aisles, and then the body of the Mingo Queen quivered with agony and she exclaimed: "Maneto is good. I have saved your life!"

"Saved my life! What do you mean?" cried Robert, stunned and shocked by the occurrence.

Before she could answer another report was heard, and then Tennessee appeared, with his weapon still smoking.

"What is the meaning of all this?" asked Robert now almost breathless with excitement.

"It means," replied Tennessee, "that White Eagle, jealous of your power over Allequippa, attempted your life, and that she prevented the execution of his design by sacrificing her own."

"Oh, God, can this be true? And where is White Eagle?"

"At rest," was the significant answer. "I have avenged this poor creature promptly."

"I am going now," said the Mingo Queen, her eyes glazing, and her breath coming in quick, nervous gasps. "I am going to the bright hunting-grounds of Maneto, beyond the sunset."

Robert bent over her, and kissing her dusky cheek, said:

"You should not have done this for me. I am not worthy of so great a sacrifice."

"You were all to me," was the answer. "I do not want to live now. Bury me on the banks of the Monongahela, close by the ravine where Allequippa first saw you."

Her lips moved again, but no sound came forth, and then, with an effort, she placed her hand in that of Robert, and died.

They buried her that night, as the moon lifted its face above the hills, amid the moans and dismal chanting of the whole tribe, while Robert and Tennessee stood at the head of the grave, paying the poor tribute of their presence to her memory.

CHAPTER XXI.

A STRANGE HISTORY.

When the last clod had been heaped upon the coffinless form, Tennessee tapped Robert on the arm and bid him follow.

He led the way down through a dense undergrowth to the river bank, and motioning the young man to a seat upon the dew-wet sward, threw himself at full length by his side.

The moonlight fell full upon them, as it did upon the wide, sweeping river, on which it made a sheeny path of silver, and nothing broke upon the ear save the rustling of the leaves and the plaintive song of some night-bird.

After a silence of almost ten minutes, Tennessee said:

"Robert Ashmore, what do you take me to be?"

"A white man, of course," was the reply. "I penetrated your disguise long since."

"And yet," said Tennessee, "I deceived the French and Indians for many years. Yes, I am a white man, and the father of one you hold very dear."

Ashmore looked up, in surprise.

"Indeed!" he said. "May I ask whom?"

"Of Bella Carlyon."

"Bella Carlyon? Impossible!" exclaimed Ashmore, rising.

"No, not impossible," said Tennessee, "and when you have heard my story you will not say so."

"Well, let me hear it; go on."

"My name is Mackintosh, and not Tennessee," he began. "I am a Scotch nobleman, and during the struggle the Pretender made for the crown I espoused the cause of the Stuarts. At Preston my command was overpowered by the royal army, under General Willis, and I was taken prisoner and conveyed to Newgate."

From thence, with ten others, I escaped to France. After a short sojourn at Calais, I joined a French regiment destined for Quebec.

"While in the latter place I fell in love with the daughter of a French officer named De Bonville, and after a courtship of one year we were married."

"This alliance secured for me a captain's commission, and I was ordered to New Orleans. While en route for the far South my wife became ill, and I was forced to leave her at Roger Carlyon's cabin for three months. When I returned, I learned that she had died in my absence, having first given birth to a beautiful female child."

"Why, this sounds like some old-time romance," interrupted Robert.

"Possibly," replied his companion; "but the most wondrous part has to come yet. Overcome by grief at the death of my wife, I fled into the heart of the wilderness, and when I returned again to consciousness I was arrayed in a garb such as I now wear, and I soon made the discovery that the Indians believed I was a prophet."

"I took advantage of this delusion to preserve my life, and I have on more than one occasion used it to save the lives of unfortunate whites, who were luckless enough to fall into the hands of the savages."

"And did you never tell Bella of this?"

"No; I found her happy and contented, and thought it best to leave her so."

"But why did you not make yourself known to me?" asked Robert.

"Because, my young friend, the English government which you served had a price set upon my head, and I feared to make myself known to any one."

"You say your name is Mackintosh?" exclaimed Robert.

"Yes," he answered, "and I am also known as Lord of Glen Owen."

"The same."

"Then, sir, you have been pardoned. The king has recently issued a full pardon to all participants in the Pretender's revolt."

"Are you sure of this?" asked Mackintosh.

"Yes, I read the proclamation before I left Maryland."

"Then I am once more master of the proud manor of Glen Owen," cried the old man, "and you, sir, shall marry the Lady of Castle Owen."

The two men clasped each other's hands, and turned their steps toward Frazier's, where Bella was told the good news.

She received it joyfully, and when Robert said, "Will not lady Isabel, of Glen Owen, feel herself above the provincial captain?" she replied, "No; without your love, Robert, my new title would be very empty indeed."

At midnight a loud report was heard in the direction of Du Quesne, and the next day the victorious army of General Forbes took peaceful possession of the ruins.

It had been blown up during the night, Joncaire and his forces retreating down the Ohio. He compelled Roger Carlyon and his wife to accompany them, but in the hurry and bustle incident to a precipitate retreat, they managed to effect their escape, and the next evening they joined their foster-child and her father at Fort Pitt.

Robert and Bella were married by the chaplain of the fort, and the next evening they set out for the seaboard, and to this day their children hold possession of Castle Owen.

Roger and his wife lived to see Pittsburgh, the site of their early imprisonment, a large and flourishing city.

THE END.

Rocky Mountain Rob,

THE CALIFORNIA OUTLAW;

The Vigilantes of Humbug Bar.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.
AUTHOR OF THE "WOLF DEN," "OVERLAND KIT," "RED MAZEP," "AGE OF SPADES," "HEART OF FIRE," "WITCHES OF NEW YORK," "A STRANGE GILL," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XIX.
FOLLOWING THE STREAM.

From his covert in the rocks, overshadowed by the tall pines, Talbot watched the approach of the road-agents. He felt that he was not out of danger yet. Wet, weaponless, his fingers bleeding and sore, he was in no condition for a hand-to-hand encounter with three or four ruffians, armed to the teeth and urged on to desperate measures by the knowledge that he possessed the secret of their mountain haunts.

He could plainly see the bandits as they came on. He marked, too, the clump of bushes which concealed the entrance to the cavern, and he vowed that, if he escaped from his present peril, he would return, and aided by the miners, adorn the tall pines, which were now swaying to and fro in the breezes of the night, with a human fruit which would be a terrible proof that Judge Lynch and the Vigilantes had been holding court near by.

There were four in the outlaw band—all powerful men, all bearded, too, and wearing the black half-mask which covered the entire upper part of the face.

On they walked, straight toward the fugitive. The moon shined down clear and strong, lit up the scene as light as by day. They came on, chatting, with but little caution. It was plain that they did not dream the hunted man was so near.

Talbot was now stretched out behind a giant boulder; over him, a dense mass of raspberry bushes lent their shade; their tops touched the boulder and half concealed the form of the man crouched beneath. By Talbot's head, a second boulder touched the first, and through the crevices that lay between, the fugitive could watch the advance of the outlaws.

Nearer and nearer they came, and, at last, halted for consultation within a yard of Talbot's hiding-place, when one of the worthies produced a whisky flask and invited the others to join him in a drink.

Tantalus, the Greek, perishing of thirst, and with the water bubbling near to his lips, yet never touching them, suffered but little more than Talbot, as he lay in the cold shadow of the boulders, wet to the skin, and listened to the jingling of the flask as it went down the thirsty throats of the outlaws.

Had there been but two, the chances are that Injun Dick would have boldly risen from his ambush and done battle with them for the invigorating cordial, though they were fully armed and he was weaponless.

But the odds were too great; so Talbot was forced to remain passive.

Then the outlaws indulged in a short conversation, and by listening intently, Dick discovered that the four were a patrol sent out by Rocky Mountain Rob to scour the canyons and gulches leading down toward the Humbug Valley in search of him.

It soon became evident that his mysterious escape had sorely puzzled the road-agents, and that they were utterly at a loss to guess by what means he had succeeded in eluding them.

Then, after a delay of ten minutes or more, which seemed like so many hours to the fugitive, the outlaws departed, going southward and following the course of one of the brooks which flowed from the pool into which, like a second Jonah, Talbot had been cast out of the stomach of the mountain.

Talbot did not move. He waited to assure himself that they had indeed gone on, and that there was no prospect of their return; and thus for full ten minutes he remained quiet.

All was still; no sound, except the breezes of the night sighing through the bushy tops of the tall pines. Then a squirrel came out on the top of a boulder, sat up on his haunches and looked around him; an early riser descending from his home in the tall pine tree to drink in the fresh dew of the morning.

The appearance of the squirrel and a glance at the eastern sky convinced Talbot that the night was on the wane, and that the morning would soon come.

The lines of light in the east grew stronger and stronger; the moon's rays lost their power, and Talbot saw that the dawn of day was near. He moved restlessly, preparing to rise. Up into the pine like an electric flash, went the trunk, until at last he found a ledge in the bushy top, and, from amid the green, peered down curiously at the mortal who, so woe-begone, dragged himself up from the surface of the cold ground and rested his weary limbs upon the boulder.

Talbot was chilled to the bone; his teeth chattered, and he felt as if the numbness of years had come suddenly upon him. With determined resolution he essayed to shake off the dangerous feeling. From among the rocks he picked up a short and knotted branch of the scrubby mountain oak, which grew so plentiful in the wood had been hardened by exposure until it was like iron. No contemptible weapon in the hands of an active and desperate man. Not that Injun Dick felt at all active, for each limb was as stiff as if he had laid for a night in an ague-swamp.

The sun will be up in two hours, and then I'll get rid of this cursed numbness!" cried Dick, shivering. Then, grasping his knotted club, he made his way cautiously over the rocks.

As the four road-agents had followed the course of one of the brooks, Talbot decided to pursue the other, trusting that it would be impossible for the outlaws to guard all the passages leading into the valley. He called into play his utmost caution, for he had gathered from their conversation that the brigands had been instructed to place themselves in ambush and intercept him leaving the valley. He scanned every clump of bushes, each knot of pines, and each huge boulder, before him. He stalked forward as the red Indian steals in upon his prey. A hunter stalking the keen-scented deer could not have proceeded with more silence.

Like the red warrior he noted the gambols of the wild denizens of the rocky range. When he saw the squirrel running fearlessly from boulder to boulder, and the jackass-rabbit with his long ears, not pinched up in alarm, but carelessly laid back upon his shoulders, moving in short skips over the rocky reach, he knew that the outlaws lay not in ambush beyond.

But when, peering forth from the covert of a nest of raspberry bushes, over the top of some huge rock, as regular in its outline as though carved by the chisel and the mallet of the stone-cutter, or from behind the stout trunk of some straight tall pine, he saw neither squirrel nor rabbit—no sign of animal life, he carefully examined the open space, and ventured not to cross it, until he was convinced that the man-hunters lurked not in ambush in the covert beyond.

An hour had passed since Talbot had commenced his difficult task, and he had not yet made his way from the mountain gulch. The sun's broad beam had just begun to gild the mountain tops, which shone like solid masses of silver from the snow and ice still lingering upon their summits. Climbing over the rocks had wrought a great difference in the stiffened limbs of the fugitive. The numbness had almost entirely disappeared, and he once more felt as if he was able to give battle for his life.

At last he came to a gloomy canyon, through which ran the little stream which he was following. On either side the rock rose regular as though it was a cemented wall laid by human hands, rather than the work of some terrible convulsion of nature in far-off ages.

Once through the canyon, Talbot doubted not that his eyes would look upon the Humbug Valley.

CHAPTER XX.

THE MYSTERIOUS VOICE.

The canyon was but a narrow passage in the rock, barely thirty feet in width from wall to wall, and the mountain streams, spreading out in shallow pools connected by little rivulets, filled the entire space.

Talbot saw at once that the only method of getting through this rift was to wade through the pools and down the stream. He understood now why the outlaws had chosen to follow the course of the other streamlet. That, like the brook that Talbot was on, evidently found its way through the wall of rock by means of a canyon similar to the one through which Talbot had decided to pass, only he guessed that the other canyon was wide enough to afford a passage-way over the rocks by the side of the stream.

Into the gloomy gorge, then, Talbot went without hesitation. The walls, rising straight upward two hundred feet or more, encompassed him. No sign of life was there within that gloomy spot except that, as he waded through the still pools, or jumped from boulder to boulder, in the middle of the purling stream, the speckled trout, swift as the arrow from the bow, would dart from under the sheltering rock and flash across the brook.

Twenty minutes or so had Dick toiled onward through the dark canyon, when it turned slightly to the right, and a hundred yards beyond ended.

Now came the danger. Talbot guessed at once that by the opening of the canyon the road-agents would lie in wait.

Once again he stole onward with noiseless steps; the knotted-club he grasped with a firmer hand, and nerved each muscle in his frame for a desperate conflict. He expected that any moment might bring him, unawares, upon his enemy.

A dozen steps more and he would be clear of the canyon. The moment of danger was near at hand. Noiselessly Talbot advanced; ten steps and he stood at the canyon's mouth. Beyond him lay the upper valley of the Wisdom, and afar off, on the clear blue sky, he could see the curls of smoke which rose from the city of Humbug Bar.

But there was something else which forced itself upon Talbot's vision, besides the blue sky, the rising valley and the smoke rings. Scarcely fifty paces from the mouth of the canyon, seated upon the ground, indulging in a game of cards, were three of the road-agents, while the fourth, a cocked revolver in the hollow of his hand, was leaning over a giant boulder, and keeping watch and ward to the north.

The backs of the outlaws—except one of the three engaged in the game of cards, were turned toward Talbot. The watch was directed to the north, not to the canyon through which Dick had come. A moment's examination showed Dick the cause. A hundred yards or so to the north was the entrance to another canyon, through which, as Talbot had anticipated, the other branch of the underground stream found its way into the valley, and then into the Wisdom.

The outlaws had apparently no idea that their prey would come by any other path than by the one which they watched.

Oh, how Talbot cursed the unlucky chance that robbed him of his weapons. If he had had his trusty six-shooter with him, he could easily have "picked" off two of the three engaged in the game of cards, if not all three of them, before they could have risen to their feet. But, weaponless as he was, he could only crouch down behind one of the rocks at the entrance of the canyon and wait, trusting that in time the outlaws would tire of their watch and return to their hidden abode in the mountain's side.

The card-game proceeded with increased earnestness; the sentinel on watch turned every now and then to note the progress of the play; it was plain that he wished to join in with the others.

The outlaws were playing "poker," gambling with bits of stone for money as seriously as though ounces of gold-dust depended upon the turn of the card.

Talbot had plenty of time to examine how the land lay. About five hundred paces from the rocky range was a trail leading along parallel with the valley, evidently an old Indian road, made by war-parties crossing the rocky range from the Salmon River Valley, the country of the Flatheads to the hunting-grounds of the Blackfeet and the Crows. In the valleys washed by the Wisdom River and the Jefferson Fork of the great Missouri, into which the waters of the Wisdom flowed.

Then, suddenly, came a sound on the clear mountain air which made the outlaw-band drop their cards, grasp their weapons, and spring to their feet. The sound also brought hope to the heart of the fugitive crouching down behind the boulders.

Sharp on the mountain air came the clear ring of a horse's hoof, shod with iron, striking upon the rocks over which ran the old Blackfoot trail. No Indian pony, then, bearing a red-skin, but a white-man's charger.

A moment or so the road-agents paused and listened; then they held a muttered consultation, and afterward, like so many snakes, crouched down behind the rocks and bushes, evidently lying in ambush for the horseman.

Sharper and sharper the sound of the horse's hoofs rang out on the air as the stranger came gradually on.

From his hiding-place, Talbot could plainly see the outlaws examining their weapons and preparing to attack the new-comer.

He fully comprehended the danger to which the horseman was exposed. Advancing helplessly, not dreaming of peril, he would fall an easy prey to the human wolves crouched behind the rocks.

The path the horseman was following so wound in and about the rocks and clumps of trees, which fringed the mountain's side, that, though the sound of the horse's hoofs could be plainly heard, yet the rider was still concealed from sight, nor would he come into view until he reached the little open space through which flowed the two branches of the mountain stream.

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The horseman then was safe from danger until he reached the open space, but Talbot fully understood that the moment the horseman should appear in the opening the revolvers of the outlaws would speak, and the death-cry of the victim would follow as surely as the white smoke of the powder would curl upward on the clear

"We've hit him, by Cain!" cried the giant, in glee, and, uncautiously, he exposed his head, expecting to see some signs of a death-struggle going on amid the bushes into which they had fled.

Crack!

Again the rifle spoke; again a stricken man went down, shot through the brain, dying instantly and almost without a groan. The giant would never more figure in scenes of carnage and plunder.

For a moment the two remaining ruffians gazed in ghastly astonishment upon the lifeless form before them, then looked forth toward the covert of the hidden foe, who, single-handed, was making such a terrible fight.

Another curl of white smoke was rising slowly on the air, but this time it came from the other side of the Indian trail.

The outlaws guessed the truth in an instant; they had been tricked. After firing the first shot the stranger had changed his position, and their volley had damaged only the bushes and the rocks. The hollow moan of pain was simply a device to induce them to relax their caution. It had succeeded only too well; bitterly the brigands cursed their own stupidity and the shrewdness of their unknown foe.

"What had we better do?" questioned one of the outlaws, looking, with a troubled face, at the bloody evidence of the stranger's skill in marksmanship lying stiff and still before him.

"Get!" replied the other, laconically.

"Without trying to get even for this work?" the other asked, pointing to his slain comrades.

"Are you tired of the game, an' want to 'pass in your check'?"

"Well, no, but I hate like blazes to cry quits just yet. Four on us ag'in' one, an' get flaxed, too; it won't do to tell Rob 'o' that. He'd drive us out 'o' the band in no time."

"I don't keer what anybody says," the calculating ruffian said, doggedly. "I ain't a fool; I know when I've got enough; thar ain't the least bit of a hog 'bout me. This stranger's 'hand' is too much for me; I 'pass' this time for sure."

"I'm going to have another crack at him, anyway!" the first outlaw cried; "you kin jest git of you want to."

"Well, I'll stay long enough for to see this cuss plug you, too, then I'll 'levant!' the second replied, coolly.

"He don't plug me much, you bet!" the other cried, in anger. "I'll flax him yet!" And then he shook his clenched fist savagely at the invisible foe on the other side of the little open space.

The empty menace came near costing the outlaw dear, for, incautiously, he exposed his hand beyond the cover of the bowlder, and the alert foe, ever on the watch, promptly sent a bullet at it, which was fired with such excellent aim that it tore away a piece of skin from one of the outlaw's knuckles.

A storm of curses came from the lips of the road-agent as his hand dropped down, numbened by the bullet's shock. The ruffian at first thought that his hand was shattered.

"Oh! you're anxious to be laid out, you are!" the other outlaw exclaimed, out of patience at the bravado of his comrade.

And just about this stage of the game, Dick thought that he might as well take a hand in. From his post of observation he had seen the two outlaws fall by the bullets of the ambushed foe, and noticed, also, the wounding of the third outlaw. And now, from the uneasy movements of the two road-agents, he confidently guessed that they were preparing to retreat from all further contest.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 152.)

Cat and Tiger:

OR,

THE STAR OF DIAMONDS.

A ROMANCE OF LOVE AND MYSTERY.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.

AUTHOR OF "BLACK HAND," "IRON AND GOLD," "RED SCORION," "PEARL OF PEAKS," "HERULETS," "THE HUNCHBACK," "PLAMING TALISMAN," "BLACK CHESNUT," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TRAP SPRING.

But, Pedro Gomez did not know, nor could see, that he was capable of imagining that he had any thing to fear from the beautiful girl who had made him the tool of her wickedness.

He was ushered into the apartment—to meet a lovely face, bright and smiling; and Helene, reaching out one hand, greeted him cordially.

"Well, Pedro, I am glad to see you."

Then, to the gaping servant who was wondering what his mistress could have to do with such a man—whoever he was, and why she should receive him in the tapestried room:

"Bid Mijo fetch us some wine, if he has returned from his errand."

"Yes, my lady." And with a final stare at the tall, broad, coarse Pedro Gomez, the man withdrew.

Pedro was attired in a very respectable suit of clothes, and his face was cleanly shaved. But he felt very awkward in Helene's presence, because he saw her scan him rapidly from head to foot; and to himself he was saying, while he took her dainty hand in his big fist and bowed over it:

"A curse upon these toggeries I have on! By the devil! I am pinched and sore! Better to have come with my spade under my arm, an independent gardener, than to try to play the gentleman in a coat that is too narrow, and pants that are too tight. I wish they were well off of me!"

And Helene to herself:

"He thought he would please me by coming here well dressed. Poor fellow! A bear in a gilt cage. But I am going to fix him, presently. Pedro Gomez knows too much. He is dangerous."

Then aloud:

"You saw my signal to-day, Pedro?—sit down."

"Yes, lady; and I thought it meant to come to you," adding, mentally, as he seated himself: "Now, then, I am in this mud-pat-of-a-seat again. I hate it. But the chairs shall be different when we are married—this beautiful devil-of-an-angel and I! How handsome she looks to-night! Ah, see! She is going to pay me the three thousand dollars! How noble—how true to her promise! Look!" the closing portion, as Helene went to the desk and began counting over a number of crisp bills.

"Pedro"—running over the money while speaking.

"Yes, lady."

"You have served me well. I think you and I can get along very nicely together."

"How angelic!" he thought; and, "Yes, lady," he said.

"Here is what I promised you for your services."

She went up to him, and extended a great roll of bank bills.

Pedro, in his eagerness, arose and bowed—arose so quickly that he upset the chair and tipped over on his toes, as he bent to receive the money.

"A million of thanks, lady!" and mentally: "Curse that mud-pat-of-a-chair! It is making an ass of Pedro Gomez."

For Mijo, who just then entered with the wine, saw the accident and could not help grinning.

"Mijo, begone." The order in a severe tone, and frowning as she detected the grin in the mulatto's face.

She wheeled forward the small table, on which Mijo had set the wine, and drew a chair near to her visitor.

"Ah! that careless servant," she exclaimed. "Pedro—bring me that small writing-desk from the corner."

He hastened to obey.

His back was turned hardly a moment; yet, in that time, she accomplished an object. When he brought the desk, and placed it at her feet, she motioned him to his seat, and filled two glasses with the sparkling wine.

"Let us drink, Pedro."

"Ay, we will drink. A long life to you, lady," tossing off the liquor at a gulp. Helene barely sipped at the edge of the glass with her red lips.

"Ah! how good that is—but strong, very strong."

"You are a strong man, Pedro," with a smile.

"Yes, true, I am a strong man," and within, as he held the glass to be refilled: "Oh! see her smile. What a beautiful devil she is! And if I live for fifteen years—" he stopped short in his thoughts, for it struck him that Helene Cerey had not yet fulfilled the whole of her part of their bargain.

"Well, Pedro?—now, is not this wine delicious?"

"It is heavenly! But, lady—"

"Say on, Pedro."

"You have forgotten something."

"I? Forgotten?—what?"

"Did you not promise to sign an agreement to become my wife, if I desired, after fifteen years?"

Pedro was becoming bolder. The wine was strong. The first draught had gone to his head; the second made the blood rise to his face; now, when he paused, at the third, to remind her of the promised contract, he felt his whole system glowing strangely.

"Ha! ha! ha! ha!" she laughed, playfully. "I had really forgotten it. But it is ready. It is here, in the desk—somewhere. Drink again, Pedro, while I look for it. Drink."

Helene Cerey did not know whether Pedro could read or not. For fear of missing her object, by arousing his suspicions, she had, indeed, prepared the contract mentioned—one that, after fifteen years, would give him either half her fortune or her hand in marriage.

When she drew the document out of the desk, the gardener had drained another glass.

"Not long, now!" she thought, bestowing a covert glance upon him; "he will soon topple over, and then—"

"Ah! here it is, Pedro."

"Lady, you are kind to me. I shall try to live for fifteen years, and marry you. Yes, we must get married." He was talking a little thickly.

"You think you would like to be my husband, then?"

"I love you to madness!" he exclaimed. "I must live for fifteen years, to marry you."

"We would be a very happy couple, no doubt. Drink again, Pedro," and Helene Cerey laughed—for two reasons: first, the presumption of the gardener was ridiculous; so, because she saw that he could not keep up much longer.

"Yes, we will drink again!" and he laughed—for two reasons: first, because he could not help it; second, because he was elated with the golden prospects.

"And we will have wine like this on our table always."

"Yes, always wine like this!" he echoed, rather boisterously.

"Drink again, Pedro."

He was already away in his seat. Two—three—four beautiful girls were floating in his vision; each smiled upon him, each proffered a glass of the sweet wine that was intoxicating him.

"Presently I shall be drunk!" struggled through his bewildered brain.

"I am swimming round and round like a chip in a whirlpool; and not one, but many beautiful devils are before me. But I will drink again. I will drink till I can drink no more; then sleep it off while she fans my brow. And—by the devil! my head is afe!" I feel strangely! I am burning! I some one is closing my eyes!" And aloud, as he started up, and groped blindly:

"Ho! let me up. There is a trick here! that wine is drugged! ha! you devil-angel! you—you—"

"—!" The glass fell from his hand and was shattered on the floor, and Pedro sunk helplessly backward in his chair.

When she saw her tool completely in her power, her dark eyes flashed, and she could not suppress the hard laugh that rose to her lips.

She hurriedly extracted the document from Pedro's pocket, and threw it into the small desk.

Then she clapped her hands thrice.

At the signal, a portion of the drapery was pushed aside, and two wolf-visaged men darted out.

"There!" she cried, pointing to the insensible gardener. "Be sure you apply the asp, as I instructed you. You will find your pay in his pockets. Do not make a half-way job of it, now."

"Never fear on that," growled one.

Grasping up the limp and heavy Pedro Gomez, they carried him through the secret door.

All was still.

"Now!" she broke forth, with a grating laugh, "let them trace the death of Floroso Earncliffe to me, if they can! Ha! who's that?"

Some one was thumping on the panel of the door leading to the hall—thumping guardedly, yet persistently.

"Who can it be?"

She advanced, and turned the key in the lock—then uttered an exclamation of astonishment.

For, she was confronted by Carlos Mendoza!

CHAPTER XII.

CARLOS MENDOZA STEALS.

There stood the shrewd old Quack in his very long, very gowin-like frock coat—his hat in one hand, an impish smile on his narrow face, and a cunning leer in the little black eyes.

"Carlos Mendoza! You here?"

"Ha! did you not send for me?" inquired the squeaky voice.

"True. But—how came you here, at this door, unannounced? How did you pass the hall servant?"

"That is not so wonderful, madame."

"Explain."

"Malediction! I did not pass the hall servant. Had I come so that others could see me, would it not have been dangerous?"

He had entered the room; and she had closed the door, facing him in her surprise and inquiry.

"Dangerous, Carlos Mendoza?"

"Caramba! yes!" and whining: "would it not be dangerous to madame, if any of the servants had seen me coming here?—seen Mendoza, the Quack, entering the house of the beautiful belle, for a private interview! Eh?"

"But—"

"Madame has a good character," Mendoza has not. Servants will talk, and they oftentimes ruin a family, by their chatter, chatter, chatter. Ho! do you not comprehend?"

"Then, by what means—?"

"Besides," he interrupted, "I do not care to be seen in places of this kind—in the halls of the rich, with beautiful belles, who buy poisons, and asps, and drugs, and love-powders. Madame has just got rid of a visitor." The last with a glance at the wine table.

"Carlos Mendoza, tell me how you gained access to my house, to my private apartments, without being seen by any of my servants?" Helene spoke impatiently.

"Nothing easier!—nothing easier!" whined the squeaky voice. "The garden gate was wide open—so were the windows of the parlor. To climb the balcony was no trouble—to tip-toe up here was less difficult. You see?"

And through her mind flashed: "You see?"

"How long was he at that door?—what did he see, perhaps, through the keyhole?"

But the face of the Quack told her nothing. It was the same as always—unreadable, save that the little black eyes were snapping and sparkling perceptibly more than usual.

"You see? Malediction! I outwitted the servants, and am here. He! he! he! he! And I come on business, madame," the closing sentence more seriously.

"Yes, on business. You received my note?"

She left the door, and gave up trying to imagine whether Carlos Mendoza had heard or seen aught of what had transpired in the room a few moments before.

"The note came," he answered, whispering, and nodding his head.

"And the powder?"

"It is here. Malediction! I could not refuse two hundred dollars for ten minutes' work. Here, madame."

From one of the deep pockets in his long frock coat he produced a small, neatly-folded crimson paper.

She snatched it from him, with an exclamation of satisfaction, and thrust it into her bosom.

"The dose, Carlos Mendoza—how much?"

"Half the powder to a bottle of wine, madame."

"And the effect?"

"Charming! Whoever drinks of it must yield to all the fires and impulses of love. It is admirable. It has never failed. I have sold a great deal of it. Carlos Mendoza has made more love-matches than a dozen designing mothers! Ho! ho! ho! ho!" and he chuckled aloud at the thought.

"If I administer this to a companion, he or she will love me?"

"Will worship you!—will embrace you!—kiss you! Excellent! It is just what you want. Ho! ho! ho!"

"How do you know that it is just what I want, Carlos Mendoza?" and the dark eyes bent upon him in a sharp gaze.

"How do I know? What a question! Malediction! I have sold five hundred such powders. They are only sought for one purpose. You wish some one to love you, whether they please or not—?"

"It is no business of yours, Carlos Mendoza."

"Madame is right; it is none of my business," and to himself he added: "Caramba! I'll see about that, my beautiful belle! Oh! ho!"

The price of this is two hundred dollars?"

"Yes, madame, and it is very cheap."

"Remain here a few moments, and I will bring you the money."

When she had disappeared, the Quack took a quick step forward, and knelt beside the small desk which was upon the floor.

In a second he had drawn out the document which Helene had given to Pedro Gomez, and which she stole away from him before turning his insensible form over to the dark-visaged men who were in waiting in the secret room—

the written agreement of Helene Cerey to give the gardener, at the expiration of fifteen years, either half her fortune or her hand in marriage.

"Caramba! I have it!" he hissed, as he glanced over the paper, and then secreted it in one of the capacious pockets of his coat.

"Ha! ha! You say it is no business of mine, eh? Wait! Oh! well! See. You have not yet done with Carlos Mendoza! What a prize for Cortez! Ho!"

When Helene returned she found the Quack just draining a glass of wine, over which he nodded, then sneaked his lips, then thought:

"That is the wine of which Pedro Gomez drank. She has drugged it admirably!"

Helene Cerey had observed his movement. Her brilliant eyes lighted up strangely. What if she could persuade him to drink more?—to get under the influence of the powerful drug his own hand had prepared?—and then rid herself of him in some way; thus completely obliterating all possible chances of a discovery of her recent actions. For she felt that Carlos Mendoza must know of nearly all, if not all, she had done, and such knowledge was menacing to her.

"Here is your money," handing him the amount. "I thank you, too, for the services you have rendered me."

"Madame may always call upon me with safety," stowing carefully away the roll of bills she had given him.

"I will not need you further," she said, "and so, let us part on good terms. There is wine. Drink."

"Madame is generous. Oh, how sociable!"

Old Carlos grinned, and his serpent-eyes twinkled.

"Drink," Helen urged.

"Oh, how very sociable in madame!"

"What do you mean by that tone, Carlos Mendoza?"

Placing one finger to the side of his hooked nose, and half-closing one eye:

"Keep your wine, my beautiful belle! Carlos Mendoza is too wide awake to be tricked by his own manufactures! He! he! he! he! You have drugged that wine remarkably well. I tasted it. But, never fear—it won't harm me. See this." He displayed on the end of his tongue a small sugar-coated pill, which he had placed in his mouth immediately upon drinking the wine.

Gladly he bit his lip, but said nothing.

"Oh, how very sociable in madame!"

Well. But, malediction! you would have poisoned me. How ungrateful! There—no matter; I forget it. He! he! he! he! Good-evening, again, madame," and the short, slim, snaky form glided noiselessly out at the door.

For a moment she stood still—only a moment; then she stepped quickly forward and glanced out into the hall.

But, even in that brief space, the Quack had vanished.

"Carlos Mendoza is very shrewd. He suspected my intentions at once. He carries antidotes in his pockets. Could he have heard or seen what passed between Pedro Gomez and I? Poh! I am growing silly, to worry over imaginary distrusts. Now—ah, that document I wrote for Pedro Gomez. I must destroy it."

She turned to the small writing-desk. While looking for the paper, she continued:

"Pedro Gomez has disappeared forever, now, if those men act promptly. May they, too, get

a sting from the asp with which I told them to poison the gardener. Ha! where can that paper be? I'm sure I put it in here; I—" she paused and stared at the floor, as if a sudden thought struck her.

Then she arose hurriedly, and rang the bell. "Ola appeared."

"Tell Mijo to have my carriage brought around at once. Do you hear, Ola?—at once?"

"Yes, my lady."

"Be quick!"

And when the girl hastened to execute the order, Helene walked to and fro, frowning, clenching her white fists, and hissing:

"Carlos Mendoza is a thief! He has taken that paper from my desk. I am sure I put it there, and no one but Carlos Mendoza has been in this room since. How uncircumspect of me!"

When the carriage was ready, she entered it, ordered the driver to a house three pavements beyond the shop of Mendoza, the Quack, and in a few seconds was speeding away in the direction of Willow street.

When she alighted, the carriage moved off—to return at the expiration of half an hour.

The shop of Carlos Mendoza was closed. But Helene, familiar with the place, entered a side passage that led to the rear office.

As she neared the door, she heard voices in animated conversation.

One voice said:

"Malediction!"

And another voice said:

"Caramba!"

She paused to listen; then stooped to peer in through the keyhole.

CHAPTER XIII.

HELENE CEREY HEARS SOMETHING.

CARLOS MENDOZA and his son, Cortez, were seated at the round table in the small rear room.

The latter was holding up, in the light of a tall, flaring lamp, the Star of Diamonds; and the Quack was gazing on it in wonder and delight.

"And this is what she told Wart Gomez about," Cortez was saying. "The Star of Diamonds, with an unlucky history, and which always brings trouble to its possessor. Now, whether to keep it—"

"Ho! what! malediction! we will keep it. Throw away those diamonds?—those beautiful diamonds! How could we?"

"But, old man, you forget the history I have been telling you."

It was evident that Helene Cerey had missed a very important part of the conversation.

"The history? Caramba! We will tear the thing to pieces, and sell the brilliants. Let me have it, Cortez!—let me have it!" He took the star in his hands, and turned it over and over, muttering and chuckling to himself.

The young man appeared rather gloomy.

"Ho, Cortez! How beautiful!—how valuable! A fortune! He! he! he! he!"

"Keep it yourself, then. I want none of its fates tangling round me."

"What makes you so sour? Poh! poh! we're in luck; so be merry." He twirled and tumbled the star round and round in his skinny fingers, while he continued to mutter and chuckle—this avaricious old Spaniard, who sold quack medicines to hide his real mode of living, which was mostly after the manner in which we have seen him deal with Helene Cerey.

"You forget again, old man," Cortez rested his elbows on the table, and sunk his chin to his hands, while he stared frowningly at the opposite wall.

"Forget what?"

"That there has been a murder done, together with the obtaining of that star—perhaps two murders. Ha! I heard a noise."

He started to his feet as if stung by a serpent, and looked quickly around.

"You are nervous, my boy. Sit down. Well, if there has been murder, that does you no hurt."

"But Caroline Mandoro?—for she will always be Caroline Mandoro to me, if she did marry Gomez?"

"Well, if she is dead, too?—what matter?"

"Matter enough—"

"It can not implicate you."

"Malediction! But it can!" cried Cortez, in sudden excitement, and bringing his fist down, with a thump, on the table. "It can implicate me, old man, and I am worried about it."

"How?" asked Carlos, returning his son's stare.

"Caramba! Do you not see? Caroline Mandoro was my sweetheart. Her husband, Gomez, has been murdered—she was carried off and then disappeared. If some one should say: 'Look—Cortez Mendoza, mad at the man who married his sweetheart, murdered that man, then abducted and killed Caroline Mandoro, out of revenge'—then what? Eh? Malediction!"

"But you did not kill Wart Gomez! You did not touch Caroline Mandoro!"

"True enough. But—Caramba!—that will not count. I shall be arrested on suspicion. I have enemies who would perjure themselves to drag me down. Satan! can you not see, now? I will be tried for the abduction and murder of Caroline Mandoro!"

"Poh! poh! who will start the story?"

"There are plenty, if they once think of the scheme. It is best for me to leave these parts, I guess."

"Malediction!—no. I have another sweetheart for you. He! he! he! he!"

IN BAD COMPANY.

An old story re-narrated.

BY JOE JOE, JR.

Two dogs met on the highway once,
While going on a journey;
Their Christian names were Tray and Boncoe,
Their surnames don't concern ye.
Said Tray, "Good-morning, my good friend;
We're having pleasant weather!"
They passed the compliments of the day,
And traveled on together.

Tray was a splendid dog, though born
Of parents poor but humble;
He looked well on his grizzled brow,
Nor stopped to growl or grumble;
He never ran away from school,
Nor licked his little brother,
And always went right straight along
On errands for his mother.

But Boncoe was a far different dog,
Quite proud and overbearing;
He looked well on his grizzled brow,
But his eyes were all in anger;
Said he, "My friend, those boots of yours
Have been too long in service,
And oh! that shocking bad hat, sir,
To look at makes me nervous!"

He rated Tray in such a style
He almost lost his patience,
And boasted of his college days
And of his rich relations;
But Tray bore it with manly heart,
And never made objection,
But turned the current of the talk
Upon the spring election;

And so they trudged along the carts
All going the wrong direction.
They came into a country town
And stopped before the door;
"My friend," said Boncoe, "let us go in—
I feel a little laggy."
"No, no," said Tray, "I'll wait for you,
And rest upon this log, sir;
I think it's hard to drink and be
A gentlemanly dog, sir."

So Tray sat there reading the signs,
Till out came Boncoe from the door;
For he had lapped a glass too much,
And woke Tray's pitying feeling.
He took his arm to the village dog,
The village dog went following,
All making fun and cracking jokes,
And "Oh, what green 'uns!" hollering.

But Boncoe hurrahed for Jackson,
And went stumbling over the door;
And said, "What sidewalks they have here—
They make a man take poor steps!"
And then he saw a cursing thyness,
And assed the people awfully,
And swore he'd clean the whole town out,
And carried on unlawfully.

The marshal came and took them both
And tied their hands behind them;
And took them to the mayor, who heard
The charge and heavily fined them;
And though Tray vowed his innocence,
The mayor would not letter
In his decree, but sent them both
To jail on bread and water.

Now all you little boys and dogs,
The moral plain enough is,
Be careful of your company—
Unless you're after office.

The Vivandiere.

BY LAUNCE PONTRE.

In a corner of a newspaper, under the thin cover of a brief telegram, sometimes lies concealed a hero or a heroine, unsuspected by the world. Many heroes and heroines, many fierce trials and deadly perils, lie hid in the simple announcement, two years ago, during the great Franco-Prussian War, that "the Kabyles have risen in the outlying provinces of Algeria, and a state of siege is declared." The meaning of those words a soldier could understand, when he reflected on France, supine and bleeding under the heel of the stolid German giant, France, almost exhausted and blindly fighting against hope, suddenly confronted by this new foe within her colonies.

At the time there was hardly a French soldier in Algeria. All the flower of the army had been drawn away, Zouave and Turco alike, to perish on the field of Woerth. Algeria was only held by the few regiments of the foreign legion, a mass of Poles, Italians, Irish, Scotch, English, and Germans, men of all creeds and nationalities.

And in the midst of the misfortunes of 1871, the Kabyles rose. As in the case of the Sepoy mutiny in India, that rising meant relentless murder, outrages on the helpless and unresisting, all the cruelties that Mohammedan barbarism can inflict. No wonder the French officers of the foreign legion turned pale when they thought of the fate of the outlying officers of the Arab Bureau, with their families, left almost without a guard among enemies.

The most exposed of all these officers was Colonel Jaquelin, the Chief of the Bureau at Guelma, who, at the moment of the rising, was out at a little frontier village named Elarban, with three soldiers, his daughter Lucie, and Fifi Bocard, the *vivandiere*.

Colonel Jaquelin was one of those bluff old soldiers who never flinch from danger, and he was such a veteran among the Arabs and Kabyles, that he had become almost as one of them, and trusted them implicitly. When the rest of the bureau officers were fleeing to Constantine to place themselves in garrison, Colonel Jaquelin continued on his regular tour of inspection among the Arabs, as if nothing had happened, with his three orderlies, his daughter, and the *vivandiere*. And by this means he gained much more than many would think. The Arab orders nothing but courage, and Colonel Jaquelin's courage was sublime.

Perhaps that of his daughter and Fifi was even greater, for they, too, knew all the danger, and never showed a sign of tremor among the gloomy, scowling Arabs and Kabyles who surrounded them, ready to fire on the first look of fear.

But at last came a day when even Colonel Jaquelin saw that further progress would be suicide. They were within seventy miles of Constantine, and the next tribe on his road was the Beni Oumbark; and the Beni Oumbark were "up."

Then Colonel Jaquelin called Fifi to him, as they sat in the guest tent of the Sheikh of El Arban, and said to her:

"Fifi, dost thou love Lucie enough to risk life and honor to save her?"

Fifi Bocard, a trim, black-eyed little grissette from Paris, with a sharp, wicked tongue, and motions as quick as a deer's, colored up to her forehead, and her eyes filled as she answered:

"My colonel, you know I would. Did you not take me from a life of shame that ended in that plunge into the Seine? Did you not save my life and bring me here, where no one knew me, to lead an honest life? and has not Mademoiselle Lucie been kind to me? Ah, my colonel, you don't know how many sneers and stabs a woman must suffer before a kind word and deed can make her as soft as a baby. Colonel, I would die for you and Mademoiselle."

Colonel Jaquelin waved his hand carelessly. "Chez! but! ma fille, it was nothing. Listen. I want you and Mademoiselle Lucie to leave me to-morrow, when I have cleared El Arban, and to ride post to Constantine. You know the way, Fifi, and no one must see you go. There are spies of the Beni Oumbark to follow me, and if I go with you, we shall be overtaken. The horses of the orderlies are too slow for our pursuers. Lucie will ride my horse; it is the best. You will take hers. I shall take yours. The Beni Oumbark will follow me, and you

will get to Constantine, if you ride fast, by to-morrow night. Stop. There is danger on the way. I am told that a company of the foreign legion, these brutal Germans, have mutinied and joined the Kabyles. You may meet some of them. If so, I trust Lucie to you, and remember, Fifi Bocard, God and her father will require her at your hands, if you reach Constantine alive. That is all."

"It shall be done, colonel. But you, what is to become of you?" said the *vivandiere* in a low tone of awe.

The veteran looked at her steadily from under his grizzled brows.

"I shall die for France. It is the last duty of a soldier."

After a little pause he added:

"If the good God wishes for me, I am ready to go, but France will yet be saved to regenerate Africa."

He dismissed Fifi with a sign, and night fell on the village.

In the hot, scorching noon of Africa, two girls were riding at a slow, staggering gallop toward Constantine, having left the desert sands and come among the mountains after a fearful race with time. The distant minarets of the town showed over the frowning walls at the summit of the gorge, amid clusters of palm trees, and the two equestrians were spurring along, animated with fresh hope, when Fifi's horse, a slender, swift creature enough, but deficient in bottom, floundered and stumbled on its knees, and fell over on its side, dead. No wonder. The poor thing had come sixty-five miles, in some six hours.

In the moment when Lucie had pulled up, and Fifi was trying to extricate herself from the fallen animal, five or six men, in the ragged, dirty remains of the Foreign Legion uniform, rushed from the thicket in the roadside and seized the two girls as prisoners. The whole affair was concluded in less time than it takes to tell, and a fierce jabbering of German gutturals told them that they were in the power of the mutineers of the Foreign Legion.

And what did Fifi, then? She lay still when she was once seized, and exclaimed, in her old, saucy tones of voice:

"Ah, Hans, Caspar, Wilhelm, is it you come

bright glow of light, in the pulsing melody, in the airy evolutions of the dancers.

Beatrice Carrol, with fair hands fitting over the polished keys, felt the discordant influence, but crushed the dissatisfaction it gave her under the stony pride for which the belle of three seasons was notably distinguished—crushed it, and smiled upon young Montjoy, who turned the music for her, in a manner so gracious that that youth was pardonable for the irrepressible delight thrilling to his finger-tips and beaming in his fair, insipid face. Fortunate that it required but little to thrill and irradiate Montjoy, and that tender impressions were of rapid succession with him. Miss Carrol's smile might have worked more harm than when expended upon Montjoy.

Mr. Leavitt was more openly annoyed. He was a heavy, practical man, without the tact to assume indifference—not caring, perhaps, for he made no greater secret of his present aspirations than of the laudable ambitions raised and achieved in the business world, where he was more at ease than in this quiet resort, with its dozen or so fastidious *habitués*. He detached himself from one of those little side-groups and stood quite alone, a thickset, ungraceful man, with silver threads sprinkled plentifully through his brown, sleek hair, and some hard lines in his stolid face.

If some untoward influence was at work, there was also an understrain attuned to the sweetest of passing delights. Miss Rutherford and Clyde Adair, in the curtained recess, blissfully unconscious of the two pairs of jealous eyes fixed upon them, found neither discord nor oppression. They had been among the waltzers a moment before, and dropped in here, forgetful of the hundred perplexities which had assailed them both in their thinking seasons since this delicious, dreamy state of existence had begun. Clyde Adair, with a month's grant of absence, assistant cashier in a private banking house, standing well with his employers, but without a chance of promotion, at least for years to come—it was the height of folly, surely, to hazard so much of life's promise on such presumptuous hope as he could entertain. And Elaine Rutherford, with slender hands and pure, sweet face, fair as a lily and as inefficient in practical ways, reared with all the fastidious,

not seem so very forbidding. With that strong heart and cheerful spirit the nobility of sacrifice shone at the brightest.

"Thank you, Elaine. You give me courage to hope. Will you let me see you to-morrow night at this time? I shall be gone all day but will wait here for you if you will permit."

"To-morrow night?" There was lingering wistfulness in her voice. She knew what the request meant, knew that he would offer her then the great love which her own heart pleaded for, and to-morrow night it might be too late. If he would only speak now, one word would turn the balance on all the hard worldly teachings and ambition inbred—the alloy tempering the purely unselfish nature. But the word was not spoken, and Elaine signified her assent to meet him there as he had asked.

"For what?" she asked herself, wearily. "To pain myself and seem unworthy in his eyes? It is more probable than any other result." The discordant influence astir had reached to her, and after that the evening dragged heavily. They went within and Adair was summoned to play duets with Miss Carrol; perhaps that was not without its effect upon Elaine.

She was claimed at once by Mr. Leavitt, whose gloomy brow relaxed and whose unvarnished manner grew odious in his assumed proprietorship.

"I was coming out to you with a shawl, Elaine," he greeted her. "Dews are unhealthy, and heavy damp takes the freshness out of your face. I noticed you were *glace*, and I've observed the effect at the store. I don't suppose there's a man in the rooms knows so much of your women's drygoods as I do." He thought, poor man! to insinuate his merit by that, believing the great absorbing interest of the sex to be vested in dress.

"I don't suppose there is," retorted Elaine, "nor one who knows less of our moral requirements."

"I've vexed you now," he said, in the bewildered, deprecating way which always disarmed her anger through his utter inability to comprehend in what way his error was committed. "I'm apt to blunder these things, I know. I'm sorry, for I wanted to ask you—I meant to, that is—something very particular."



THE VIVANDIERE.

to save us? I thought 'twas those rascally Kabyles."

She knew the faces of all, for they belonged to the German company of her own regiment. The men recognized her, too, for they helped her up, not ungraciously, took Lucie, who was dumb and pale with terror, from her horse, and led both girls away through the thickets, talking German as they went.

Lucie understood nothing, but Fifi presently whispered, as they passed along, close together:

"Mademoiselle, they are going to separate; two men are to guard us, while the rest watch on the road for more booty. We are to be sent to the harem of a Kabyle chief. Do nothing, but leave all to me. I will save you."

Her words were verified presently by the party separating, two of the ruffians ordering them to follow them, while the girls did in silence. One of the men led Lucie's horse, and the other followed the girls, musket in hand. In half an hour they halted, and the horse was reared into a thicket and fastened there, when the leadmost man threw down his musket and seized Fifi.

"The chief may go hang," he said, brutally: "you shall pay toll before he gets you."

The next moment he staggered back with a yell, and fell dead.

The quick, dexterous girl had drawn a little dagger from under her jacket, and stabbed him to the heart.

"Ah, *coquin, veux-tu!* rascal, would you?" she cried to the next man, who had paused almost in the act of clutching Lucie, appalled by the dead body of his comrade. "So the Kabyle chief is to be cheated, is he? Not while Fifi carries this."

And she whipped out a little pistol from the same hiding-place, and fired full in the face of the mutineer, who fell without a groan. Fifi turned to Lucie.

"Quick, mademoiselle, we've no time to lose. Your horse is rested, and they'll hear the shot and come after us. We must mount and ride for life and honor."

And ride they did; and, what's more, the noble old horse carried them into Constantine safe, loaded as he was; and Colonel Jaquelin arrived some days after, for the Beni Oumbark spared him after all. The men of that tribe, like all Arabs, adored bravery, and respected the old hero, who calmly faced them all, while doing his duty. They warned him to depart in peace, and he reached Constantine alive, to embrace the daughter saved him by the courage and address of FIFI.

Love and Law.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

Music within the lighted rooms. Two or three couples waltzing at the upper end, two or three little groups of conversationalists, and two figures dimly seen within the shadowy drapings of an alcove. Grovewood parlors had presented that scene in numberless repetitions and slight variations for a month past. And yet—and yet, something was amiss in the

luxurious tastes of Fortune's darlings, but with no further hope from the relative whose easy indulgence had done this much—it was quite as preposterous for her to indulge more than fleet-footing sentiment for the handsome, frank young fellow by her side.

Miss Rutherford had realized it keenly before this. She had taken herself to task, carefully studied her own capacity for self-abnegation, and found herself wanting in a deplorable measure. It was a painfully humiliating knowledge, taking her worldly training in one side of the balance against the longings and consciousness in the other.

It was all at rest now, along with the personal reminder which a glance at Mr. Leavitt would not have failed giving her. The fragrant outdoor air, just stirred to the slightest breeze, stars overhead and a pale crescent of a moon dipping low down in the west, were in peaceful union with the quiet which had come upon them. They were tempted out presently, and stood on the broad white steps leading down to the dewy lawn and scattering flower-plots whose brilliant blooms were blotted out in the semi-obscurity, their sweet odors deliciously apparent.

Words would have marred the perfect serenity which prevailed at first, so they were wordless until their full hearts needed the relief. A clash of the music within, and the badinage and laughter of a party drawn near the alcove they had lately occupied, broke the heavenly spell, bringing them back to the contemplation of sublunary things.

"Dreamland was never more perfect," said Adair. "If we could go on dreaming forever."

"Charming but unprofitable. Visionary lives are always aimless, and in the end disappointing."

A clinching argument coming from Miss Rutherford. "She could see the smile upon his lips. 'It almost reconciles me to the straight and narrow line, not a visionary field certainly, to which I return soon. I wonder if you know what all that means?'"

"Something intensely disagreeable without a doubt. I can't plead in favor of hardship and the discipline of self-denial. We are raised such helpless, dependent creatures we are forced to selfishness in our own defense."

It was a little of the reasoning she had applied successfully to herself before this, but the awakened caution which prompted her to speak so now, was a wavering safeguard with his presence so near. There was a touch of restraint in his reply.

"You are right; this restriction, this war with fortune, requires strong hands and brave hearts to invest with any pleasantness. And yet I fancy that the struggle might knit closer bonds of affection, bring more enduring rewards, than to benefit by the success gained alone without the sympathy which is dearer than all."

"If we were only fitted to the task—that is where the great mistake is made."

"Not irretrievable."

"But it is such a hard school—that of adversity. Yet we are not all cowards; necessity makes brave men, and women too, I suppose."

Just then the straight narrow line of life did

Elaine caught her breath short. Was it coming already, which might make Adair's seeking vain to-morrow night? It was expected that this heavy obtuse business man would propose to her and she would accept him—she had reconciled herself to that result in terminating the last battle fought with her own promptings—and to-night had revived her rebellion, weakened her resolve.

"I wanted you to grant me an interview in the morning, early if you can, as I shall have to ride over to Green Creek during the day. Will you, Elaine?"

A little respite, however unavailing! She gave her assent rather unintelligibly, very hopelessly.

What use to quarrel with fate?—she supposed it was fate which left her choice between all the luxurious, tasteless, expensive things, which were necessities to her, and her heart's love.

Miss Carrol, going up the stairs with her after they left the parlors together, paused at Elaine's door.

"May I come in for just one minute? Good creature, I knew you couldn't refuse! What a fortunate mortal you are; I absolutely envy you."

"You have no reason, surely."

"You think not because I am my own mistress, and not forced to your state of dependence; but I'd give it all for your gift of winning love. It is pleasant though to be rich, one has the privilege of helping one's friends, and I have formed a scheme for helping—who do you think?—Clyde Adair."

"Will he accept ad?" Elaine asked, doubtfully. "He is proud and independent."

"Even pride can be overcome," Miss Carrol said with a mellow laugh. "You should be convinced through overcoming mine, for of all the people on the globe, you are the only one I would willingly make a confidant. He clanked to remark to-night that a poor man should never marry a dowdless bride of refined tastes and luxurious habits, and *vice-versa*; for while love is delightful as a sentiment, it is the poorest possible substitute for a substantial start in life. It gave me an idea. There is but one way I can employ my wealth very decidedly to his advantage, so I mean to marry him."

"You mean to marry him?" repeated Elaine, turning to her dressing-table to conceal the quick change passing over her sensitive face.

"Yes, my dear, when he asks me. You don't suppose I'm barbarian enough to overstep the rules of propriety, and I would not be telling this to even you if I were not assured he will ask me very soon. It is no sacrifice to me to marry a poor man though, it may seem so to you, who of course never contemplated any thing of the sort, and no wonder, while your prospects are so well assured. Did you ever hear of the Leavitt litigation suit? No! Then I have, by accident. The decision is to be given to-morrow; there's not a doubt but it will end in Mr. Leavitt's favor, and a snug plum of half-a-million more to be turned to his account. I would really envy you, but for Clyde. Would you believe that I'm just a trifle sentimental for the first time in my life?"

Elaine went down the stairs with slow, inelastic step.

She had pleaded a headache and remained in her room all day after five minutes' time given to Mr. Leavitt in the morning. His horse was waiting without, she was looking really ill, and he was a man of few words. So he had put the plain question—would she marry him? He would spare no effort in seeking her happiness; it would be his pleasure to consult her wishes always; he would not urge an answer then, but would hope to receive one favorable during the evening. And with a nervous glance at his watch, he had hurried out and ridden away toward Green Creek to receive the decision of his suit.

So Elaine went down to keep the promise she had given Clyde Adair, wondering drearily what he could have to say, and very bitter with herself for the faint dizziness which came over her and the heavy pain bearing on her heart all that day. She should have been thankful of the chance which was sparing her the trial of an ultimate choice, and this was the best way of course.

Clyde, walking the piazza in an impatient fever, heard the rustle of her dress and turned to catch her in his arms.

"Elaine, my heart's love, no power on earth shall part us now."

She struggled from him indignantly.

"Mr. Adair! It is ungenerous—you who are to wed Miss Carrol!"

"Never Miss Carrol, never any one except you, Elaine. I meant to have asked you last night, but something you said determined me to wait."

"You told Miss Carrol that a poor man should never marry a dowdless bride."

"Ah! and she repeated it, quite accurately I admit. But your answer, Elaine."

"Without waiting for it he drew her to him lovingly, and only too willing to trust him she made no resistance now."

"Still I don't understand, Clyde—"

"That the Leavitt litigation suit is closed, the decision against the other claimant and for me. Did Miss Carrol tell you my prospect of winning?"

Miss Carrol's chagrin, deep as it must have been, was well concealed, and Montjoy's hopes in that quarter died an easy death when she accepted Mr. Leavitt.

Beat Time's Notes.

PUGILISTIC.

I NEVER had but one fight—it was when I was twenty years old. A fellow spit on my boots, and failed to obliterate it with an apology. The honor and majesty of said boots called for revenge. War was immediately declared. I bet fifty dollars I would whip him; he bet fifty dollars he would whip me: so we arranged to meet the next week at a place in the country some five miles from the city.

As he weighed one hundred and seventy-five pounds, and I only weighed one hundred and thirty, I immediately leased a butcher shop, got a slaughter-house to double their operations, and devoted the intermediate time to the consumption of beef, so as to have the necessary weight to fight him with. It was a terrible pull on the slaughter-house, I tell you.

We had kept our proceedings to ourselves, and on the morning appointed, when we got upon the ground selected, with our seconds, we found that about three hundred thirds were already there, with a rope inclosing a small circle of ground, and the preliminary bets made.

I wasn't disconcerted in the least, for I knew he would back out when it came to the scratch. The time was called, and my adversary tossed his hat into the ring, and jumping into it himself, caught his foot on the rope and landed safely on his right ear.

I also tossed my hat into the ring, and, jumping into it myself, caught my foot on the rope and landed on my right nose. I was so embarrassed, I found that about three hundred thirds were already there, with a rope inclosing a small circle of ground, and the preliminary bets made.

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